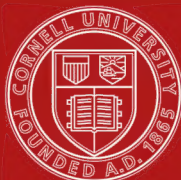




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ITALIAN HISTORY AND ART

FRAGMENT

OF A

PARALLEL BETWEEN THE

HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND ART OF

ITALY IN THE MIDDLE AGES

✓
/ (William Schomburg Robert Kerr,
Marquis of Lothian)

EDINBURGH: MDCCCLXIII

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P R E F A C E.

MY DEAR A.,

I do not think it is usual to usher in a book of this sort with a dedication ; I am sure it is not usual to correspond with one's relations in print. I do the one, because I prefer making the few remarks I have to make about it as addressed to you, rather than to even that very limited section of the public which is likely to see it. I do the other, because, as you were the cause of its being written, I like to connect you with the fact of its being printed.

You know how it came to be written. It arose out of our inspections and lionisings in Italy, and the way in which we used to try and connect the buildings and the pictures that we came across with the idea of the people who were their architects and painters. I had a notion that there was a pretty close connection between the history and the art of these people ; and the idea struck me that it might be worth while to

write down something about it, not for the purpose of printing, but simply for our own benefit and amusement. Of course, as we had hardly any books with us (I think there were none except the small English Sismondi of 'Lardner's Cyclopædia,' the 'Sketches from Venetian History,' Machiavelli's 'Istorie Fiorentine,' and Kugler's 'Handbook of Painting'), it could not pretend to be very much; and even to those, I think, I hardly referred. It was not necessary for me to do so, as my original intention was nothing but the barest sketch.

There was another object which I had in view. I thought that Italian History, which is generally considered so very complicated, was really simpler than most others; and I was desirous of impressing that idea upon you. It divides—so I thought—very nearly into four distinct periods, each having a character of its own, and which might be marked off from one another by dates very easy to remember. Further, each period, I thought, might be considered as falling again into subdivisions, answering pretty exactly to the half-centuries of the recognised chronology, while the breaks between them are marked by episodes which were obliging enough to take place just at the periods at which, for the sake of symmetry, they ought to have taken place. These four periods, as it seemed, suited not only the political, but also the artistic, and perhaps the literary, history of the country; and, finally, I thought they might be considered as answering to the four seasons of the year.

The first of these periods, which I compare to spring, extends from 1150 to 1250. Its character is that of a struggle for National Independence. It is divided into two parts—the first from 1150 to 1200, the second from 1200 to 1250. The first of these contains the struggle of the Italians against Frederick Barbarossa, the second that against Frederick the Second. The date which separates them is marked by several important results, which may be considered as episodes.

Summer extends from 1250 to 1400. The name I give to this period is the struggle of Liberty against Tyranny. It also is naturally divided into subdivisions, both historically and chronologically, by the dates 1300 and 1350. Each of these dates has its episodes, and each of the subdivisions its own character.

It is towards the end of this summer period that I have flagged in my task. A variety of reasons have caused me to do so. Want of health, perhaps, is one; want of the inspiring air of Italy is perhaps another.

I will say a few words as to what has been written, and then explain to you again what the scheme was to have been, had I been inclined and competent to carry it out.

The first five chapters were, I think I may say, written from memory—not entirely so, for I recollect referring sometimes to the little Sismondi as I was writing the fourth; and a great part of the third

has been re-written. But, generally speaking, this is what may be said of them. The sixth and seventh, which I wrote at Baden, and which I had more leisure for writing, had also the advantage of a few more books of reference ; and the tendency to expand, which had already shown itself when there was less provocation to do so, became in them uncontrollable.

The rest of it was written at home, during the course of the winter 1861-62. I had then plenty of books of reference, and might have made it as full as I liked. I did not make use of any except the very commonest—not so much from indolence, though that may have had something to do with it too, as because to do so would have been to travel far beyond the scope of my original intention. The effect of having so great a command of facts has been, naturally enough, to swell the dimensions of the latter part of this sketch out of all proportion to those of the earlier. I find, on looking back over it, that I apologise for my prolixity very early in the proceedings. Repentance, however, does not produce amendment.

This will, I think, be enough to show all that need be shown about what I have written. I find that it will be more convenient to throw my explanations of what the rest of the sketch was to have been like, had it been finished, into the form of an Appendix, which will be at the end of the “volume,” and which you may regard (as in fact it is) as a continuation of this letter.

In conclusion, and as a kind of extenuation of the

faults, deficiencies, and, it may be, mistakes of this performance of mine, I must again repeat that it was not written with a view to anything except the amusement and edification of three persons. It has not stamina enough to be cast on the world as a foundling, and there are reasons why I should not wish it to bear my name on the title-page: so that publication has been out of the question, and any idea of the kind, if I ever for a moment entertained it, has been given up; and I am better pleased that it should remain what it originally was. And in sending it to you in its present form, I hope it will be to you a reminiscence of a time upon which I shall always look back with feelings of very great pleasure. If it is so, I shall be more than satisfied.

Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

L

MAY 1863.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTORY—THE ETRUSCAN YEAR—THE ROMAN YEAR— THE WINTER OF THE DARK AGES,.....	1
II. THE PERIOD OF SPRING—THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL IN- DEPENDENCE	22
III. THE DAWNING OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS.....	31
IV. THE PERIOD OF SUMMER—THE STRUGGLE OF LIBERTY AGAINST TYRANNY—FIRST HALF-CENTURY—CLEARING THE DECKS FOR ACTION	46
V. THE PERIOD OF SUMMER—THE BATTLE OF LIBERTY AGAINST TYRANNY—ENTR'ACTE THE FIRST—THE PAPACY	74
VI. THE PERIOD OF SUMMER—THE BATTLE OF LIBERTY AGAINST TYRANNY—SECOND HALF-CENTURY—TYRANNY BEGINS TO ENCROACH	94
VII. THE PERIOD OF SUMMER—THE BATTLE OF LIBERTY AGAINST TYRANNY — ENTR'ACTE THE SECOND — ROME, NAPLES, VENICE, AND GENOA	145
VIII. THE PERIOD OF SUMMER—THE BATTLE OF LIBERTY AGAINST TYRANNY—THIRD HALF-CENTURY—CONCENTRATION OF THE STRUGGLE—GIOVANNI VISCONTI	180

CHAP.	PAGE
IX. THE PERIOD OF SUMMER—THE BATTLE OF LIBERTY AGAINST TYRANNY—THIRD HALF-CENTURY—CONCENTRATION OF THE STRUGGLE (CONTINUED)—BERNABO AND GALEAZZO VISCONTI	224
X. THE PERIOD OF SUMMER—THE BATTLE OF LIBERTY AGAINST TYRANNY—THIRD HALF-CENTURY—CONCENTRATION OF THE STRUGGLE (CONTINUED) — ENTR'ACTE THE THIRD — THE EVENTS OF 1378	291
APPENDIX	324

P A R A L L E L
BETWEEN THE
HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND ART OF ITALY
IN
T H E M I D D L E A G E S.

C H A P T E R I.

*Introductory—The Etruscan Year—The Roman Year—
The Winter of the Dark Ages.*



THINK the history of Italy is the most interesting in the world, and in some respects it would be strange if it were not so. My first notions of Italy (and I suppose every child's or schoolboy's have been the same) were visions of a distant fairy-land—of radiant skies and bright blue seas—of shining cities, where great palaces and endless marble terraces were mixed with orange-groves and cedars—of vast cathedrals, gorgeous with colour and fragrant with incense—of monks and brigands—and of people in picturesque costumes speaking a wonderful and melodious language. And at that time of life the conception that is formed of the history of that people, derived principally from such books as 'The Italian' and 'The Castle of Otranto,' is a dim, mysterious romance of mingled horror

and splendour, in which the principal figures are the Pope and his Cardinals, Jesuits and Inquisitors, Doges and Councillors of Ten ; princes with high-sounding names, surrounded by brilliant courts ; bravos, muffled in long cloaks, prowling about the streets ; and noble cavaliers, serenading their mistresses by moonlight, or exchanging thrusts with rival factions under tall colonnades. Even the very names have something stately and magnificent about them which one does not find elsewhere ; and there is always a halo about the sound of Guelf and Ghibelline, Este and Gonzaga, Barbarigo and Loredano, Orsini and Colonna, which impresses those even who know nothing about those who bore them. And, mingled with all this, is the idea that this visionary and romantic people were pre-eminent in all the softer arts of life to a degree unknown in France and England ; that they lived in an atmosphere of music and poetry ; that their buildings were like the creations of enchantment ; and that at least every other man was a distinguished painter. I suppose everybody can trace among his or her earliest recollections a notion of the canals and palaces of Venice ; and I shall never forget how much impressed I was as a child by a print which I saw of an Italian picture ; and I do not know how much, even at this day, this remembrance has to do with the admiration which I have for Guido's Aurora.

The realisation of the ideas of one's childhood has always something of disappointment about it. The translation of a vision into a spectacle, of a romance into a fact, must be to a certain extent a loss ; and in this way a fuller knowledge of Italy brings one's ideas about it down to a lower level ; but in this case the unavoidable disappointment stops there, as one cannot help feeling that one's imagination never came up to what one finds to be the reality. The first sight of the Mediterranean, if one comes upon it on a bright, warm day, must always be a brilliant surprise ; and

I think nobody's expectations could have pitched so high as to be disappointed in Italian painting, sculpture, and architecture. The piazza of St Mark, the pictures of Titian, the gates of Ghiberti, the dome of St Peter's, must, I think, always go beyond the most exalted preconceived ideas entertained about them.

And as it is with Italian scenery and Italian art, so it is with Italian history, though in a different way. In the former instances, knowledge is merely a realisation, perhaps an improvement, of the conception; in the latter it is more—it is an alteration as well. One's original notions of Italian history could hardly prepare one for the facts which a fuller knowledge brings before one. It commences with a war for national independence, of which it is hardly too much to say that it is the noblest recorded in the annals of the world.* It is not rendered trite and commonplace by constant repetition, like those of Greece against Persia, of Switzerland against the Dukes of Austria, and of Scotland against the Edwards; while more justified by necessity than that which led to the independence of the United States of America, it was not, on the other hand, like that which freed Holland from Spain, deferred too long for honour; and, above all, it was almost, if not entirely, free from those crimes—treachery, factiousness, cruelty—with which all the others, except, perhaps, that of Switzerland, have been so deeply and indelibly stained. It was a struggle in which it is possible to respect both parties; and while, in reading the history of it, one cannot but rejoice at the final termination, yet it is impossible not to be attracted by the gallant, unslavish loyalty of the Ghibellines, or to feel some sympathy for the chivalrous and unfortunate house of Hohenstaufen. I think no one's preconceived ideas of Italian history could prepare

* I am not sure that the present struggle of the Confederate States of America may not be hereafter considered more worthy of admiration; but that struggle had not begun when this was written.

him for its opening scene—a contest in which the spirit of Thermopylæ and Sempach was combined with somewhat of that which distinguished the rivalry of Cœur de Lion and Saladin, and somewhat of that moderation which makes the Peace of Constance worthy to stand by the Charter of Runnymede.

The succeeding episodes of Italy are hardly less remarkable than its commencement. Nowhere else at that time, and hardly anywhere since, can such lessons in constitutional history be found; nowhere are the characters of democracies and aristocracies, their virtues and their faults, so plainly to be read. Then, first in European history, appear the statecraft and policy which guide the relations of states to one another. Then first was it that war left off its character of mere brute force, and assumed that of a science: that laws were well made and wisely administered: that turbulence gave place to order: that commerce became a moving principle, bringing Europe into contact with the distant East, and introducing wealth, and the refinements to which wealth gives birth, into the barbarian West: that there grew up a naval power which bestowed upon Europe the dominion of the Mediterranean, and gave rise to some of the most picturesque scenes recorded in history. Then first did the works of the classic nations begin to attract attention. Then first were literature and the arts cultivated, and cultivated to such a pitch that mediæval Italy attained to an eminence which, in poetry, romance, and history, has never been surpassed, and in architecture, sculpture, and painting never equalled.

Indeed, the study of the arts in Italy can hardly be dis-severed from its political history: each is not only an illustration but a complement to the other, and they can hardly be fairly understood, or appreciated properly, apart. This fact alone would give to the annals of Italy an interest which belongs to those of no other country. It is curious

to observe how the progress of the arts keeps pace with the progress of cultivation in other respects; how the periods into which their history is divided coincide almost exactly with those which mark out and classify the political history of the country; how their development in different districts reflects the character of the people of those districts; and even, in some important instances, how their rise and decline in particular cities, and the relation which they bear to Italian art in general, correspond so closely with the political history of those cities, that the words which describe the one might with very little difficulty be made, *mutatis mutandis*, to describe the other.

There is yet another reason why, at this time, Italian history should have great attractions for us. Europe has in this century witnessed four instances of successful attempt of a nation to liberate itself from a foreign yoke; there is no spectacle, whether in past or contemporary times, which is more worthy of study and of admiration than such attempts; and of those four, on the whole, the Italian is the worthiest. The revolutions which freed Spain from the French, and Greece from the Turks, were deeply stained by the character of the people—in both cases rendered ferocious, perfidious, and corrupt, by long misgovernment; and that of Greece especially—where, to the internal vices, which had grown up to a prodigious height among a nation of a not originally very noble nature, had been added about eighteen centuries of oppression under successive hordes of foreigners, each of whom might well seem worse than the one before it—is a most humiliating record of cruelty and baseness, which almost makes one sympathise with the Turks. The rising against France, which transformed Germany from a collection of states into a nation, and gave such an impulse to German literature, is of another description, and a German may well be proud of it; and if I claim a superiority for the Italian revolution,

it must rest principally on the greater attractiveness (as it seems to me) of the Italian national character — on the greater artistic and literary obligations which we are under to Italy than to Germany—and, above all, on the greater length of time during which Italy has been subject to foreign dominion, and which makes her freedom from the vices of the Spanish and Greek struggles for independence so much more remarkable. Italy has also this advantage over Germany, that her revolution is not fully accomplished. There is always an interest in watching a struggle, which must cease after the struggle is turned into a victory: the high-wrought feelings with which the Romans watched Dentatus departing for the last desperate conflict with Pyrrhus, are not quite those which prevailed after the spoils of his triumph had been deposited in the Capitol; and there has not been, as yet, time for those who sympathise with Italy to be disappointed and disgusted. It is impossible for keen sympathies and confident expectations not to be followed by some sort of reaction; and such is the weakness of human nature, that it is rare indeed for such reaction not to be justified by the misconduct and unworthiness of those about whom they are felt. This has been sadly the case with Germany, whose great national uprising appeared only to lead to the parcelling of the country into a multitude of petty principalities, governed by the dullest of courts and the stupidest of bureaucracies, whose policy at home, was heavy repression towards their subjects and contemptible intrigues against each other, and abroad, the practice of purchasing the means of bullying the Slavonian and Italian races by an abject subservience to Russia. It is still open to us to hope that the future of the Italian kingdom may be worthy of its commencement; and while it is impossible to deny that the course of its statesmen has in some instances been signalised by too great a contempt for the character of the means employed to attain their

ends, still, on the whole, one is justified in being sanguine. The shortcomings of the German sovereigns have been mainly owing to their jealousy of the principle of liberty, whether civil or religious, and their incapacity of comprehending that of unity. Those principles are the life and soul of the Italian movement, its watchword and its battle-cry; and whatever be the crimes with which that movement may be destined to be sullied, at any rate it has not to fear the jealousies of rival kinglets, and will have nothing analogous to the religious concordats with Rome, to the holy alliance with Russia, to the ultramontanism of Bavaria, to the heavy yoke of Austria, to the disgraceful selfishness of Prussia. As yet literature and the arts have not taken their place in the national movement. There have been poets to lament the oppression of Italy, but none to celebrate her freedom. There have not been wanting those who, from the time of Macchiavelli to that of Giusti, bewailed her misfortunes, and raised passionate cries for vengeance: but no Körner has stimulated the struggle, and no Æschylus has recorded the triumph. With regard to art, it is, perhaps, to be expected that its resuscitation should follow at some little distance in the train of the civil and military restoration, and that it will take some time to arise from the degradation of the eighteenth century: but there are grounds for hope in this respect also: and I think no one who has seen the statues of Florentine worthies with which the court of the Uffizi has of late years been decorated, need despair of the future of Italian sculpture.

A fanciful comparison might be made between Italian history and the seasons of the year, which represent successively the outburst of life, the splendid meridian, the gorgeous though melancholy decline, and the hopeless ruin and prostration. In this way the history of Italy may be divided into three years. Of the first we have no distinct conception. Far back amid the mists which surround the

dawn of history, we can trace the shadow of a great nation, grave and solemn in character, gloomy and mystical in religion, wise in council, mighty in war—a people of twelve confederated aristocracies, whose empire extended, from its central seat between the Apennines and the Western Sea southward beyond the Tiber, and northward beyond the Po, till it reached, on the one hand, to the roots of the Alpine chain, and, on the other, overshadowed by its formidable presence the Greek settlements of Southern Italy. From the records of other nations we are able to gain some idea of the relations which these people bore to the Gauls and the Latins, the Carthaginians and the Greeks. We see their fleets preponderating in the west of the Mediterranean—their soldiers bearing a high repute as condottieri, and forming at one time the backbone of the armies of Carthage—their princes crushing for a short period the rising liberties of Rome. Nor do the arts of peace appear to have slumbered among them. The fragments of their paintings and sculptures which are still preserved in museums, and, still more, the specimens of their architecture, which are to be seen in the forms of fortresses and sepulchres at Cortona and Volterra, Perugia, Fiesole, and Corneto, give us a high idea of their civilisation, and not a little insight into their character; but what can be gathered from external testimony and internal evidence is not much. Their literature is completely lost: the language of the inscriptions on their monuments is as a sealed book; and till some Champollion or Rawlinson shall have been able to bring to bear upon them the same patient research and felicity of conjecture which has done so much to uncover the buried histories of Egypt, Assyria, and Persia, the sunshine which illumines the mountain ridges will not be able to disclose the valleys beneath, or to chase away, to any appreciable extent, the darkness which envelops the annals of ancient Etruria.

The winter which separates the first year from the second is like an Arctic summer night. Hardly had the brilliant hues of the Etrurian autumn had time to fade into sombre uniformity, when its decaying foliage was pushed from the boughs by the vigorous shoots of the Roman spring. The history of the second year is much more distinct than that of its predecessor. The period of spring commences with the foundation of the city in the eighth, or perhaps, more correctly, with that of the republic in the sixth century B. C., and concludes in the third, with the completion, after long struggles and vicissitudes, of the constitution of the state, and the final consolidation of Italy. It was a period of great virtue and great patriotism, of self-devotion for the good of the republic, of indomitable valour and energy in war, and of a moderation in civil contests unparalleled in ancient history. The successes of the Romans during this period are essentially national—they were not wrought by individuals: Cincinnatus and Camillus, Papirius Cursor and Curius Dentatus, appear less as the moulders and leaders than as the representatives of their country; and though the *families* appear strikingly marked with individual character, and some of them exercised a great influence upon the destinies of Rome, scarcely any *man* can be named at the period whose non-existence would have caused any material alteration in her history. The second epoch, that of summer, lasts from the commencement of the First Punic War till the establishment of the Empire; and now the character of the state begins to change. The intellectual element, hitherto somewhat in abeyance, begins to make its appearance, and by degrees to predominate over the moral. The virtues of the old Romans begin to assume the character of their cognate vices, and their vices to assume colossal proportions. Their courage and military greatness, their pluck and energy, are undiminished, but their patriotism grows less, and their cruelty

and arrogance greater. By the introduction of foreign luxuries, the vices of civilisation are added to those of barbarism. Their enemies are slaughtered, and their subjects pillaged, with equal unconcern ; and the moderation which had distinguished their early factions is exchanged for a blood-thirstiness and ferocity which have made the wars of Marius and Sylla, and the conspiracy of Catiline, bywords to posterity. Amidst all these scenes of blood and tumult the figures of individuals stand out more and more : we hear less of the senate and people, and more of the generals and statesmen ; and at length, out of the chaos of contending factions, all alike selfish and all alike unscrupulous, a corrupt nobility, a degraded populace, rapacious officials, furious demagogues, mercenary soldiers and yet more mercenary orators, the conquerors of the world succumbed to the yoke which they had imposed on others, and there arose the gigantic fabric of the Roman Empire. This may be considered the period of autumn ; and never did that season commence with a more showy seeming, or bear within itself so completely the principle of destruction. A dominion which included and went beyond the whole area of civilisation—a capital, the splendour of which can hardly be realised by the imagination, far less paralleled by anything in modern times—a code of laws the most perfect ever compiled, and which still forms the foundation of nearly every legal system in Europe—an army, which no other force could look in the face for an instant—a religion in which all the creeds of the world were fixed and united, and which pointed, as to its centre on earth, if not more, to the divine personality of the Emperor and to the eternal majesty of Rome—present a picture of magnificence which still enables one to understand faintly the effect which it must have had at the time ; while those who could read the signs of the times must have discerned the future in the utter lack of virtue that prevailed—in the same spectacle

of venality, corruption, sloth, sensuality, which affected all ranks from the highest to the lowest—in the rapid alternations of the imperial dignity from one hand to another, at the will of the prætorian guards, or the legions of the provinces—in the abominable crimes of the emperors, producing no reaction of public feeling—in the administration falling into the hands of the freedmen and domestics of the court—and, above all, in the gradual decay of the military spirit, which transferred the defence of the empire from the Italians to the provincials, and from the provincials to the barbarians. It was time, when this came about, for winter to set in. In the early autumn, the harvest which had been sown by the virtues of the first and the genius of the second period had been reaped by Augustus. A brilliant and glowing foliage, a soft and balmy climate, had distinguished the later autumn, the “Summer of All-Saints” of Trajan and the Antonines, a period which Gibbon considers the happiest in the history of mankind. But in proportion to the wealth of the one and the beauty of the other was the completeness of the decay; and when the long-deferred winter at last came on, it was ushered in by storms of appalling severity from every quarter of the horizon, and the Roman Empire was overthrown and buried by the hot blasts of Persia, the icy hurricanes of Tartary, the driving sand-columns of Arabia, and the overwhelming avalanches of Northern Europe.

The Romans never attained to any pre-eminence in the intellectual department at all proportioned to that which belonged to them in other ways. Even in those parts of it in which they were most successful, it appears to have been owing more to their practical than their intellectual aspect; consequently, while they cultivated with perseverance and ability the fruits of the mind, the flowers never succeeded with them. Their lawyers and orators will bear comparison with those of Greece, France, and England; but their poetry,

philosophy, and history—their architecture, sculpture, and painting—were not the natural growth of a garden, but rather a collection in a conservatory, partly of grafts from the old Etruscan stock, but principally of exotics transplanted from the more congenial soil of Greece. When once in the Roman conservatory, they were well taken care of, and under a judicious forcing process made some further developments, which almost naturalised them; and this is particularly seen in the two most practical departments of literature and art respectively, in history and in architecture. It should not, however be forgotten, that Rome had a sort of poetry of her own; but even this was polished in a Grecian fashion, and disguised in a Grecian dress. The alteration was most advantageous; and never was a foreign element introduced with happier effect than when the old Fescennine verses of Italy developed into the satires of Juvenal.

Unlike the former winter, that which followed upon the Roman year was a very long one. It is difficult to fix the precise date of its commencement, which may variously be placed at the removal of the seat of empire to Constantinople, or the dethronement of Augustulus by Odoacer, according as the storms with which it is opened may be considered as belonging to it or to autumn. I should fix its termination A.D. 1152, at the accession of Frederick Barbarossa. But although spring cannot be said to commence before the latter date, we can see the germination of plants beneath the soil, and even the appearance of some of them above ground—some destined to flourish into the autumn like wheat, while others fade away like snowdrops as the season becomes warmer. Among these latter, the principal ones, that I recollect, are the three republics of Southern Italy—Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi. Their fate in after ages has been very different. The first might forget the loss of her freedom in becoming the capital of the most

powerful despotism of medieval or modern Italy : the second, now the strongest fortress of Southern Italy, has lately again attracted the notice of the world by affording a last shelter and refuge to that despotism when chased from the rest of its dominions : while Amalfi, the most brilliant of them all, to whom fate seemed to have reserved a future like that of Venice and Genoa ; the inventress of the mariner's compass, the foundress of the order of St John of Jerusalem, the preserver of the Pandects of Justinian ; whose fleets explored the furthest corners of the Mediterranean, whose citizens and those of Venice supplied the armies of Constantinople, whose coins circulated in the distant East, whose maritime code gave the law on the seas, is now a miserable half-submerged fishing-village, whose existence, but for the boating excursions of English tourists from Naples, would probably be quite forgotten. Rome, meanwhile, the capital of the ancient world, and the centre of Latin Christianity, preserved a loose and turbulent subjection to the Eastern Empire, which, early in the eighth century, was exchanged for an equally turbulent independence. Venice, founded in the fifth century by a band of fugitives from the invasion of the Huns, and strengthened in the sixth by fresh settlers driven from their homes by that of the Lombards, advanced by degrees from a collection of hamlets to the dignity of a city, from a struggle for subsistence to the pursuit of wealth, and from a precarious independence to an assured empire ; and analogous causes, by collecting into two focuses the people of the Ligurian and Tuscan coasts, in order to resist the piracies of the Saracens, gave rise to the two great maritime republics of Genoa and Pisa. The rest of Italy was divided, during the earlier part of the period, by the struggles for dominion between the Lombards and the Greeks ; the former, masters of Northern and Central Italy—the latter, intrenched in the east and

south, and supported by the free states, which drew closer to Constantinople, to whom they allowed a nominal superiority, in order to shield themselves against the formidable Lombards. The conquest of these latter by Charlemagne put an end to this strife; and the revival in his person of the Western Empire re-introduced the principle of order, which seemed to concentrate itself round the name of the Emperor, and never, even in the wildest times of anarchy, was completely lost. The weakness of Charlemagne's successors, fruitful as it was of disorder and crime, was not unfavourable to liberty. The Lombard, Tuscan, Umbrian, and Æmilian cities, deprived of all control or protection from the central power, began to look to themselves for defence. By degrees they surrounded themselves with walls, organised a rough military system, elected their own magistrates, and even gave themselves constitutions, which the emperors either were unable to interfere with, ashamed to notice, or glad to acknowledge, as the only means of securing their feudal rights and dues. The obscure factions, by which the liberty of the cities was fostered at the same time that it was disturbed, might not be worthy of attention; but a great conflict of principles which grew up in the eleventh century, and was felt into the remotest extremities of Western Europe—and perhaps, more than anywhere, in Italy—should be noticed as having had a most important effect in advancing the Italian cities to maturity, by giving to their party-conflicts the basis of ideas, and by uniting them with those which divided the whole of the Latin world. In the “War of Investitures”—for so it was called—the Italians seem to have rather acted on the principle of lending their aid to the weaker party. At first, when the Church under Hildebrand was girding itself for what then seemed a hopeless struggle, the Lombard people forced their unwilling clergy to submit to the great scheme by which a spiritual militia was organ-

ised—the celibacy of the priesthood; and afterwards, when the civil power seemed, by the memorable scene of Canossa, to be prostrated at the foot of the ecclesiastical, it was the Lombard people that nerved the Emperor to renew the contest, and enabled him to drive his triumphant adversary from Rome to die in exile at Salerno. The maritime cities stood somewhat aloof: those of Southern Italy succumbed to the Norman invaders, who had, in that part of the peninsula, compelled the Lombards, the Saracens, and the Greeks, to learn peace in a common subjection; Pisa and Genoa were occupied by their constant wars with each other, or with the Saracens of Africa, from whom the former wrested Sardinia and the Balearic Isles, and the latter Corsica; and Venice, exclusively occupied by her relations with the east, and her efforts to obtain and preserve the dominion of the Adriatic, is hardly to be considered an Italian city at all.

It may seem absurd to talk of literature and the arts during this dark period, but yet there is something to be said about them. Of literature at this period, indeed, I know but little—perhaps there is but little to know; but my idea is, that from the time of Boethius, down to the conclusion of the “dark ages,” it was almost entirely eclipsed, and that the only signs of life it gave were the occasional appearances of some metrical chronicle or panegyric, or some religious effusion, all of them alike the productions of the cloister, and none of the least importance in throwing any light on the national life. I do not know whether the old annals of the different cities can be considered exactly as literature. A great many of these annals have been lost; but from a very early period it was the custom to preserve them with care. At Genoa and Venice, and, I have no doubt, in most other cities, there was a particular officer appointed to take charge of the archives, to keep an account of important transactions, and even to make a short abstract of the proceedings of the parliaments. It would be

rather amusing to get hold of an early portion of the *Cartulario Pubblico* of Genoa, and read a report of the speeches of honourable members, Dorias, or Embriachi, or Lercari, on the subject of the ways and means for a Saracen war, or to take into consideration the state of our relations with Pisa, or to draw attention to the bull which, it was understood, had been published at Rome on the subject of a crusade. Even the statutes of those early times have a good deal of fascination about them which does not usually pertain to that species of literature; and from what I have come across of the old laws and proclamations of Florence, Genoa, and Siena, one conceives a very high idea of the people who produced them—there is so much religious sentiment, so much simple chivalry and determination not to be beat, so much boyish trustfulness, so much (to use a big word) idyllic freshness, that one cannot help thinking of Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes of the history of the patriarchs in the Campo Santo.

There is more to be said about the arts. The introduction of Christianity contemporaneously with the foundation of the Empire bore in it a revivifying principle which might have had great effects in this respect as well as politically, had it not been that the new religion had no need for architecture, and set its face against sculpture and painting, till the period of its acknowledgment by Constantine; and by that time, Rome being too far gone in both ways to be revived by anything short of a total reconstruction, all that it could do was to retard the decay which it was unable to prevent. This, however, it did. The requirements of religion for churches, baptisteries, &c.—requirements which the old temples could not satisfy—gave birth to somewhat of a new order of architecture, not without beauty and dignity; and painting and sculpture were supplied with a new class of subjects, and animated with a new spirit. A good deal of study has been latterly ex-

pended on the relics of Christian art to be found in the catacombs ; but it was not till the time of Constantine that it can really be said to have commenced. The mosaics of Sta. Costanza speak more of the freshness of the religion than of the decrepitude of the state ; and those in the tribune of SS. Cosmo and Damiano at Rome have, amid many faults, a grandeur which ill reflects the degradation of Italy at the beginning of the sixth century. The mosaics which are to be found so profusely at Ravenna, and almost all of which belong to this period, merit even higher praise. Gracefulness and grandeur of design, and a vivid feeling for colour, which are to be found at Rome separately in the two churches above-mentioned, and in the apse of the vestibule of the Lateran baptistery, are at Ravenna often found in combination ; and there is besides, in many cases, a sense of beauty of form and expression, and an attempt at historical treatment and picturesque grouping, which one may look for at Rome in vain. As instances, though by no means the only ones, one may cite the Cathedral baptistery, and the Churches of S. Vitale and Sant' Apollinare Nuova, the former belonging to the fifth, the others to the sixth century. At length the general decay reached the arts also. The parallel which I have mentioned that may be drawn between the political and artistic history of Italy, is to be found strongly traced during this winter period ; but in those weary times causes were longer in producing their effects than they were afterwards ; and there were two distinct aspects in which the national life may be regarded, the civil and the ecclesiastical—art being at this period principally connected with the latter. I have not space to do more than just to indicate these causes of difference between the revolutions of art and politics, but I think it will be found that the result was that the former followed upon the latter at the distance of about fifty years. At the close of the sixth cen-

tury the lamp of art seemed to have entirely gone out. It had been kept up by the Church long after the Empire had fallen ; but the Church was itself succumbing to the barbarism of the time, and some foreign influence was required to restore it. That influence came, and came from the old quarter. Greece, whose genius is traceable in much of what remains to us of the art of Etruria, and which was the parent of that of Rome, was destined a third time to exert a dominion in Italy : but this time it was not in the guise of beauty, but in that of pomposity : it was not a principle of life, but rather of death : to go back to the old illustration, it produced not a conservatory of flowers, but rather a museum of fossils ; in a word, it was not the influence of the Athenian people, but of the Byzantine Church. This seems to have begun to show itself about half a century after the conquest of Italy by the Byzantine arms under Justinian, and to have lasted about five centuries on the whole, during the greater part of which time, though the Greek dominion had been broken by the Lombards, the Italians, as has been shown, associated themselves with what remained of it in order to obtain its protection. Naturally, the most numerous specimens of it are to be found at Rome, which abounds with those rigid and ill-drawn figures, morose faces, and impossible draperies standing out on gold grounds, which century after century have attested the undeviating strictness of rule, and the complete want of genius, which prevailed in the Eastern Church. Following the political history of the country, the latest specimens * to be found at Ravenna belong to

* I might have said *only* specimens, for I know of no other than those which incrust the Church of Sant' Apollinare in Classe. As in the Romanesque times, the mosaics of this period at Ravenna are very far superior to those to be seen in Rome. The connection between Ravenna and the East was severed before the Byzantine style had sunk to its greatest degradation ; and while that connection lasted, the Eastern influence came most directly from headquarters, and, consequently, in a better form than it did anywhere else.

the end of the seventh century: at Rome it seems to have died out about fifty years after the final severance between that capital and Constantinople was effected by the revival of the Empire of the West: its influence is traceable a good deal later in Southern Italy, at Capua and Salerno; and at Venice, where alone in Italy the Eastern connection was identified with the spirit of freedom, and whose increasing wealth and splendour gave her the means of indulging her taste in art to an extent which is not found elsewhere, the Byzantine style effected its great triumph (if such it may be called) of decorating the very Oriental Church of St Mark with a complete series of very Oriental mosaics, in the eleventh century, at a time when it had died of complete inanition, unregretted and unreplaced, in the rest of Italy. I think, before taking leave of the Byzantines, I must say a good word for them. It was better that art should live through the dark ages in a petrified form, than not exist at all; and I must confess to rather liking the colossal figures of ugly saints and Madonnas which stand on tiptoes in the air, on gold grounds, in so many of the Roman churches. In architecture, too, though the style got to be somewhat weak and puny, it never sank as low as it did in mosaics; and I do not know that any building could be named, with perhaps a few exceptions, to which the expressions, fascination and loveliness, could be better applied, than the aforesaid Church of St Mark. As architecture was the art which most preserved its vitality, so was it the first to rise to a new life. As early as the ninth and tenth centuries, the forms of Rome and Byzantium, fused together, and touched with the spirit of the German nations, gave rise to a new style, in which the grace and contemplativeness of the South were combined with much of the vigour and energy of the North. The earlier specimens are rude; but about the middle of the eleventh century it was brought to sud-

den perfection by the genius of one man. The seat of this great revival could almost be guessed beforehand. Any one who knew anything of the later history of art in Italy would look for it in Tuscany; any one who knew anything of the political history of Italy at that time would expect to find it among the maritime cities; and the only one of the Tuscan states which had risen to any pitch of power and civilisation, the only one of the maritime cities which was at once national in tendency and artistic in taste, was Pisa.

About A.D. 1050 the Pisan fleet broke the chain with which the Saracens had blocked the harbour of Palermo, took the town and shipping collected there, and returned laden with booty, to be deposited in the public treasury. The simple piety and patriotism of that day prompted the citizens to find some means of disposing of their spoil, which should at once be a glory to their city, and testify their thankfulness to Heaven for the triumph they had won; and they resolved to build a cathedral which should be worthy alike of the State and the occasion. The task was intrusted to the architect Buschetto; and never was a happier selection made. From his brain sprang, not only that splendid cathedral—which, with the buildings, well worthy of such a centre, that have since grown up round it, still stands unchanged, a marvel to all to whom the past history of Pisa is a blank—but all the halls and churches which may be considered its posterity, and which, scattered over the whole of the north of Italy, attest what, in by-gone times, was achieved both in strength and in beauty by the later Lombard architecture.

I feel as if I had dwelt rather too long on this winter period, which ought to have been disposed of in a few words; and my sole excuse must be that the events just alluded to seem to belong to the season of revival rather than to that of decay. For Pisa, indeed, in history, and

for architecture among the arts, the period of spring came earlier than for the rest ; and were I writing their history alone, I should place its commencement about one hundred and fifty years earlier than I have done. Alas that the precocity of the growth of that gallant and polished republic should have been paralleled by a premature old age and an early fall !

CHAPTER II.

The Period of Spring—The Struggle for National Independence.



THE point at which Italian history may be said really to commence is the year 1150. The first period lasts from that date to A.D. 1250, when Frederick the Second died. This period, which, following the old comparison, I shall liken to the season of spring, has for its leading idea the struggle for national independence, and for its centre-point, to which the eye is chiefly directed, the city of Milan. The religious strife which had so great an effect in promoting the germination of the Lombard mind, had an influence no less powerful, though more indirect, in advancing its maturity. The hesitation which the northern Italians had so judiciously shown between the Church and the Empire, began, as time went on, to consolidate itself into the form of two opposing parties. The names of two great German families, who headed the corresponding factions north of the Alps in the time of Hildebrand, supplied them with badges and appellations, which were destined to survive the principles they at first represented. The Ghibelines took their title from the Franconian house of Wibelung, who held the Empire at the commencement of the strife; the Guelfs, from the Welfs of Bavaria, the most

strenuous supporters of the Papal pretensions. Each party could number among its supporters many powerful nobles, and many flourishing republics ; and amid these, Pavia, the capital of the old Lombard monarchy, and Milan, the seat of the episcopal chair of St Ambrose, seemed to be pointed out by history and association as the centres respectively of the two parties. Partly owing to the great power of the latter, more perhaps to the fact that the mass of the Italians leaned rather to the party which rested on opinion than to that which rested on force, the Guelfs began gradually to prevail. They used their power with an insolence and haughtiness which alarmed and exasperated their antagonists ; and it was as much in order to redress the grievances of the latter, as to claim the rights of the imperial power, that Frederick Barbarossa, chief of the house of Hohenstaufen, and the most powerful sovereign that Germany had known since the days of Charlemagne, descended into Italy in 1154. At the diet of Roncaglia he listened to the complaints of the Lombard Ghibellines ; but his attempts to restore the balance between the two parties only showed the determination of the Guelfs not to submit to his arbitration without a struggle ; and for about thirty years the republics of that party were engaged in a desperate warfare against the whole force of Germany and the great name of the Empire, wielded by the ablest statesman and most formidable captain of the age. It is needless to enter into the details of the conflict. It was long and dubious : Milan was twice conquered and once destroyed : at one time the imperial power seemed to have completely prevailed. But the spirit of the Italians was indomitable. The torch of freedom, as it fell from the hands of Milan, was caught up by Verona, and her sister cities of Venetia : the organisation which had been wanting to the Guelfs at the beginning of the strife, was supplied by the League of Lombardy, which those cities founded ; and the exactions

of the *podestàs* established by Frederick in the cities which had submitted to him alienated his supporters, and showed that the loyalty of the Italian Ghibellines was unstained by anything of servility. A schism in the Church, produced by a disputed succession to the Papal chair, in which the Emperor ranged himself upon the side which the victory of their antagonists has branded as heterodox, gave to the Lombards a new and most formidable ally ; and by the Pope's espousal of their cause, the two great master-spirits of the modern world—the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty—were banded together against their common enemy. The religious aspect of the renewed conflict drew the maritime cities into it, as protectors of the Church. Genoa gave to the exiled Pontiff a refuge within her walls ; and Venice, if we may believe her own historians, inflicted upon the imperial fleet, commanded by Frederick's son, a crushing defeat, which broke his power upon the seas. This was the first time that Venice interfered in the politics of Italy ; and whether the story of this victory, which is not confirmed by foreign testimony, be true or not, certain it is that she assumed a most commanding position, that Frederick could not disturb the hospitality which she extended to Alexander, and that it was under her auspices, and in front of her great church, that an abler emperor than Henry made a submission to a feebler pontiff than Gregory, not less abject and more complete than that of Canossa.

It was not, however, by the fleets of Venice and Genoa, or by the thunders of the Church, that the liberty of Italy was achieved. The confederated republics supported their cause by arms : Guelf and Ghibelline combined to rebuild the city of Milan ; a new town called by the name of the Pope, Alessandria, arose in order to check the imperial power in Piedmont ; several sieges, distinguished by as much heroism and crowned with happier success than those withstood by Tortona, Crema, and Milan, in the earlier part of the conflict, animated the courage of

the Italians ; and at length a German army, commanded by Frederick himself, was overthrown in a pitched battle at Legnano by the militia of Milan alone. This check convinced the Emperor of the hopelessness of subduing his opponents by force ; and though it was some time before he would reconcile himself to the idea of receding from the hereditary rights of his crown, in favour of those whom he considered as revolted subjects, and whom, as a German chief of a feudal empire, he despised both as citizens and as Italians, yet advancing years and Transalpine difficulties produced their various effects upon him ; and, at the expiry of a six years' truce, during which the angry passions of both parties had had time to cool, their rival claims were discussed in a spirit of moderation ; and, finally, the liberties of the one, and the rights of the other, were ratified in 1183 by the treaty of Constance, whereby the Emperor abandoned all pretension to interfere with the internal government or external relations of the cities ; and the cities, on their part, acknowledged themselves the liege subjects of the Emperor, and bound themselves to support him in war, and pay a certain fixed tribute. And thus terminated the first great conflict in modern history between a monarch and his subjects. Then was signed the first great constitutional charter of liberty. It is somewhat humiliating to think that among its long pedigree of successors, hardly any have followed it in the loyalty with which, on the monarch's side, it was observed.

A period of about forty years followed before the struggle was renewed between the league of Lombardy and the Empire, and during that time the Lombard cities, freed from all foreign enemies, turned their arms against one another. The conflict between Pope and Emperor, which went on during the greater part of its continuance, went on, as it were, over their heads ; but though they did not actually take part in it, a sort of miniature copy of it, smaller in scale

though not less intense in colour, was set up among themselves for the names of Guelf and Ghibelline. How little it had to do with the principles in which those names originated was evident from the fact, that it was totally unaffected by the position of the parties in the main struggle becoming for a time reversed ; and Guelf and Ghibelline continued to fight in the names of the Church and the Empire respectively, when the former were excommunicated by the one, and the latter placed under the ban of the other. The year 1200 may be fixed upon as dividing the first period into two parts, each marked by events bearing a superficial resemblance to those of the other, but totally differing in character. It may be roughly fixed upon as the date of several important events, the effects of which were to be felt all through and beyond the fourteenth century. The first was the pontificate of Innocent the Third, by whom the Papacy was raised to a pitch of power and splendour it had never before attained, and was enabled to play a great and decisive part in the politics of Europe. The second was the acquisition by the Hohenstaufens of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which brought Northern and Southern Italy into closer relations than they had borne to each other before. The third was the foundation, in consequence of the fourth crusade, of the Levantine empire of Venice, which for a long time drew the attention of that republic almost exclusively towards the East, and kept her aloof from, and indifferent to, the affairs of Italy. The fourth gave the first dim inkling of the great storms which were to mark the second period of Italian history, by the establishment of the house of Este as sovereigns, or (in the old Greek sense) tyrants, of the republic of Ferrara.

The second contest between the league of Lombardy and the Hohenstaufens is, as I have said, quite different in character from the first ; and it does not differ for the better. In the first, if, legally and technically, right was on the im-

perial side, morally it was on that of the Italians. The old rights of the Empire were inconsistent with the growing freedom and civilisation of the subjects. The bands which supported the infancy of the cities had begun to hamper their expansion as they approached maturity; and Frederick's *podestàs*, by their exacting and oppressive government, instead of gradually relaxing these bands, stiffened and contracted them to an extent which made their pressure intolerable. Nor can one blame the Pope for the part he took. If he waged war upon the Emperor, it was in self-defence; and the superfluous arrogance which he showed in the Emperor's humiliation at Venice, may be excused in one whose career as Pope had been that of an exile, and whose high pretensions had been insulted, and whose rights had been invaded by a succession of rivals, the nominees of his prostrate antagonist. In the second, however, the Popes were the aggressors. The persecution which Alexander had suffered from Barbarossa was returned with interest by his successors upon Barbarossa's grandson; and history knows hardly any more complete instance of implacable animosity and vengeance that would not be sated, than the pursuit, by the Popes of the thirteenth century, of the house of Hohenstaufen. No concessions would turn them away—no resistance could stop them. Pope succeeded pope, all animated by the same relentless spirit. In vain Frederick, in obedience to their orders, engaged to leave his dominions and head a crusade. He was detained by sickness, and was excommunicated. He concluded an advantageous peace with the Soldan, and was excommunicated again for not destroying the infidels with the sword. He returned, after having placed the Eastern Christians in a more prosperous condition than could have been hoped for by a succession of victories, to find himself branded as an enemy of the Church, to find his toleration called atheism, and the refinement of his court profligacy, to find his Apulian kingdom invaded

by Papal banditti, and to find himself made the object of a crusade. The crusade fell flat. Europe did not understand taking the cross against a prince who had just rendered to Christendom the great services which had been rendered by Frederick ; and the Pope found it necessary to come to terms. A few years of peace were the result—years which Frederick devoted, as far as his other cares would permit, to the government of the beloved land of his childhood and his affections, which he succeeded in bringing to a state of prosperity, which stands like an oasis amidst the desert of misrule, of which her history is almost exclusively composed ; and then the struggle began again—this time a struggle for death or life. The eldest son of Frederick, urged on by insane ambition and by evil counsellors, unfurled the standard of revolt in Germany : whether the Pope was guilty of a share in this great crime, none can tell ; on the whole, I think we may produce a verdict of acquittal : the Lombard Guelfs, careless of the justice of the rebel's cause, brought to his support the swords which they had never sheathed since the anti-imperial crusade ; and the Pope, seeing them committed to the war, threw his whole weight into their scale. At length Frederick's patience was exhausted ; and, surrounded on every side by unflinching enemies and treacherous friends, he stood at bay. The tyrants of Lombardy, of whom several had arisen, in imitation of the house of Este, upon the ruins of faction-tossed republics, were generally in his favour ; the people of Germany, indignant at the conduct of his unnatural son, stood by him ; and the Saracen colonies of Nocera and Luceria supplied him with a soldiery whose fidelity was not likely to be shaken by the curses or sapped by the intrigues of the Popes. The war was principally waged in Lombardy. As in the struggle with Frederick Barbarossa, genius was on one side, patriotism on the other. The Emperor relied upon his skill as a commander in the field ; the Lombards on the

strength of their walls, and the spirit with which they manned them ; and the victory of Cortenuova was counter-balanced by the resolute defence of Brescia and of Parma. It is impossible not in some measure to sympathise with the Lombard Guelfs. For the criminal aggressiveness of the Popes they were not responsible ; they only saw that the contest between Church and Empire had recommenced, and both tradition and interest induced them to assist their old ally ; and a nearer motive of action was supplied by the sudden and appalling growth of the tyrannies which were springing up around them. It was ominous that the most formidable and most cruel of them was established over those very cities of the Venetian Marches which in the former war had been the last refuge of freedom, and the cradle of the Lombard league. Its chief, Eccelino da Romano, was the Emperor's lieutenant and ally ; and the distant danger to national independence merged itself in the peril of personal liberty. Much may be said for and against both parties, the one stooping to be the bloodhounds of Gregory the Ninth and Innocent the Fourth, the other to be the patron of Eccelino ; and almost the sole spot in Italy upon which the eye can rest with perfect satisfaction, is the gallant city of Pisa—still, as of old, adorned by wealth, distinguished in arms, powerful on the seas, the head of the Tuscan Ghibellines, the metropolis of Tuscan art. The event of the war was like that of the former one. Victorious in the commencement, Frederick was crushed beneath the censures of the Church. Animated by ecclesiastical support, the Guelfs renewed the contest with better success. The successful defence of several besieged towns wearied and exhausted their opponent ; and at length a victory gained in the field over the imperial forces, under a son of the Emperor's, broke the prestige of superiority which the latter had enjoyed, and Frederick the Second was brought to the dust by the battle of Fossalta, as his grandsire had

been by that of Legnano. He did not long survive his defeat. The accumulated weight of misfortune pressed heavily upon him : his enemies dogged him with undying hate : his nearest friends and servants betrayed and conspired against him : in every one who surrounded him he perceived or suspected a possible traitor, even assassin : his favourite son languished in a hopeless though honourable captivity at Bologna : and, giving up the contest in despair, he retired to his kingdom of Sicily, which already under his government had arisen to a pitch of prosperity and civilisation unknown to any other monarchy in Europe, to die of a broken heart. The strife between his family and the popes was not over ; but its continuance belongs rather to the second than to the first period of Italian history ; and it is during the temporary lull of 1250, with the Lombard republics exulting in their fierce and victorious independence, and with Innocent the Fourth, the proudest and mightiest of all the popes who have reigned before or since, raised as it were on their bucklers to the point at which ecclesiastical power attained its culmination, while prostrate at his feet lay the representative both of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Norman kingdom of the south, the ablest and most accomplished prince of either line, and the wielder of a power which was not to be paralleled in Europe till the claims of the two dynasties were again united in Charles the Fifth. It is at this point that the curtain falls on the first period of the history of Italy.

CHAPTER III.

The Dawning of Literature and the Arts.



IN tracing the parallel between the political annals of the Peninsula and those of its literature and art, it should, I think, be stated that, though the periods coincide, the seasons (to follow the comparison which I have attempted to draw) do not. The relation of the literary seasons of Italy to the political ones is too complex to be well stated beforehand, and I must follow them out as I come to them; but in art, at least in sculpture and painting, it may be laid down as a pretty exact rule, that they are one stage later, so that the opening of the artistic spring coincides with that of the political summer—and so forth.* With architecture, the eldest of the fine arts, the case is different: here the seasons correspond as well as the periods; in fact, so far from being in the rear of the political year, architecture, as we have seen, was in its spring nearly a century before 1150.†

* This may seem inconsistent with the remark in p. 17, that the distance between political causation and artistic effect is peculiar to the winter season. I do not think it is so, however. Generally speaking, we shall find the dates of the two histories correspond, the great historical changes being followed almost simultaneously by artistic ones, though of a different stage; they are as it were on different levels, though lifted by the same machinery.

† In the department of architecture it might be possible to discover two complete cycles of seasons impressed with two distinct characters :

During the first period, accordingly, while the political life of Italy was in its spring, literature was merely approaching the season of germination, and endeavouring to shake off the influence of winter. The intellectual element begins to make its appearance, and colour the history of the age : its influence is traceable amid the shock of contending and semi-barbarous factions in the time of Frederick Barbarossa. The Guelfs found their supporters among the doctors of Rome, the Ghibellines among the jurists of Bologna ; and at the time when Alexander was appealing to the public mind of Europe to uphold his civil and religious rights against being overturned by brute force, the claims of the Empire were set forth by the learned Irnerius, at the second diet of Roncaglia, as resting upon the basis of Roman law, and co-extensive with those held by Constantine and Justinian. Nor, extravagant as those claims were, and unsuited to the altered state of society, did the assembly—composed, it is true, principally of Ghibellines—venture to dispute them. In the second half of the first period we see the first appearance of a literature properly so called. The court of Frederick the Second, in his Sicilian kingdom, was the most polished and brilliant that had been known since the fall of the old Roman Empire. Learning was encouraged, not merely, as heretofore, for its immediate and practical results, but for its own sake ; schools and universities were founded for the benefit of the people ; a liberal and judicious patronage, which did not refuse to extend itself to the Saracens, diffused itself over the land, and, under its fostering care, philosophy and poetry began to raise their heads ; and the barbarous jargon which had replaced the Latin first showed promise of rising to the dignity of a language. Amidst this bright scene of promise, the first Germanic, divided into early Lombard, late Lombard, and Italian-Gothic—the second classical, marked by the names of Brunelleschi, Michael Angelo, and Palladio. I have thought it better, however, to adhere to the original classification.

the attention is above all directed to its central figure, the Emperor Frederick. Never, since the days of Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, had the world seen such a man in such a position:—Emperor of Rome, King of Germany, Lombardy, Sicily, Burgundy, Arles, and Jerusalem; counting as his vassals the Kings of Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia, the Dukes of Lorraine and Brabant, the cities of Lyons and Berne, the Dauphin of Vienne, the Counts of Holland, Franche Comté, Savoy, and Provence;—even this accumulation of power and dignity hardly conferred more honour upon him than he did upon it. A daring soldier, an able general, a wise lawgiver, a beneficent administrator, a skilful diplomatist—poet, logician, philosopher, mathematician, engineer, architect, farmer—the writer of treatises on medicine and on falconry, the careful and successful rearer of horses and of poultry, the fosterer of commerce, the patron of art. We can imagine him escaping for a while from the cares of his vast empire, from the constant whirl of disturbance from Papal intrigues, Austrian turbulence, Lombard insubordination, Mogul or Kharizmian invasion in the north or in the east, to snatch an instant's repose in the south—superintending his buildings, looking into the management of his farms, corresponding on philosophical subjects with the Princes of Egypt or Cordova, propounding deep questions of metaphysics to the hair-splitting Mussulman doctors, studying astrology with Michael Scott, bandying verses with the grave Peter de Vineis, composing sonnets for the fair Bianca Lancia, or his beautiful Queen,* Isabella of England. And grouped round him we may distinguish other figures, the worthy retinue of such a chief:—Peter de Vineis, the able Chancellor of Sicily, whose unhappy fate merits compassion if it was not deserved, much more if it was deserved; the not less able and more unquestioned for

* She never was crowned Empress, consequently never enjoyed that title.

fidelity, Taddeo of Suessa ; Ibn Sabin, the great Arabian metaphysician ; Fibonacci, the Pisan philosopher ; the two brave Genoese seamen, Nicola Spinola and Ansaldo de' Mari, who succeeded each other as Admirals of Sicily ; and last, not least, our semi-mythical countryman, Michael Scott of Balwearie. Perhaps, even in such a throng, one may notice above all the three sons of Frederick, Conrad, Hensius, and Manfred, all of them kings, or destined to become so. They shine as yet with a borrowed light from their father, but they reflect not a little lustre in return. Like him, they are valiant soldiers and skilful captains : like him, they are not only patrons of, but proficient in the gay science of the poet and the troubadour : like him, they fall victims to the curse which, ever after the opening of the thirteenth century, appears to rest upon the house of Hohenstaufen. Conrad, the least distinguished of the three, is also the least unfortunate : few and evil, it may be said of him, are the days of his pilgrimage ; but he dies in possession of the imperial crown ; and the fate from which he is saved as by fire is reserved for his child. It would be difficult to find in history such another sovereign surrounded by such another court. That of Marcus Aurelius seems to rest its claims on the character of its sovereign alone, the sole bright spot in the dull leaden atmosphere which is already beginning to grow heavy with the coming doom. That other Frederick the Second, who has appropriated the title of "the Great," attempted something of the kind, but had not leisure, probably not the genius, to enable him to do so successfully. The nearest approach to it is the Court of Delhi under Akbar.

It seemed as though the intellectual supremacy of Italy was reserved for Sicily as that of France had been for Languedoc ; but in both cases the dawning intelligence of Europe fell under the displeasure of the Church. The towering ambition of the Pontiffs saw in it a power which

might imperil their supremacy : the stupid barbarism of the people was only too ready to believe that it was heretical, atheistical, or whatever the Popes asserted it to be ; and, like the civilisation of Southern France, that of Southern Italy, born too soon, and too precocious for strength, succumbed before its malignant enemy. The former had been stamped and crushed out by a horde of ferocious brigands, called upon in the name of religion, and blessed as the defenders of Holy Church, by Innocent the Third : the latter drooped and withered beneath the curses of Innocent the Fourth. The drama of Sicilian civilisation was not yet played out : a deeper and sadder fate was in store for it also : the same murderous hands which had destroyed the earlier reign of intellect were to be hounded on by the same unsleeping vengeance to root out the later ; and in the second period of Italian history we shall see the desolating arms of the French launch upon the fair regions of Southern Italy and Sicily, as they had done upon those of Languedoc, rapine, confiscation, and massacre, the ruin of flourishing cities, the annihilation of nascent prosperity, and that fair promise finally extinguished by the establishment of an iron despotism upheld by the sanction of a merciless and triumphant Church. Both were fearfully avenged.

The light which was in the first instance shed from Sicily struck upon many points in the North, and was refracted with a brilliancy hardly inferior to its own. In Central Italy, indeed, there was nothing to catch the ray. As we shall see afterwards in the case of art, the city where the Popes had fixed their abode laboured under a sort of curse, as of the darkness which could be felt. But from beyond this dull intervening swamp came bright gleams of intellect, like the cressets which Dante saw across the gloomy fogs that brood over the surface of the Stygian pool—gleams which but now I called refracted, but which can hardly have been so altogether. The first spot from

whence this light was exhibited was *Æmilia*. *Æmilia* was the brightest and most advanced region of Lombardy. We shall see how the art of Northern Italy made her first appearance in Western *Æmilia*, at Parma. Literature dawned first on its eastern side. The University of Bologna, the centre of civilisation to all the neighbouring lands, produced, as we have seen, the first and ablest lawyers of Italy. Irnerius, who was one of its scholars, was mentioned just now as a strenuous defender of the rights of the Empire; and the Imperial favour of Barbarossa was bestowed upon him, and upon the university from which he sprang. Frederick the Second looked upon it with a less propitious eye. Attached as he was to learning, and anxious as he naturally would be to patronise the institution which had stood so well by his grandfather in a warfare not unlike his own, his whole soul was fixed on fostering a new university, a pet bantling of his own, in his favoured city of Naples; and he was so jealous for its prosperity and advancement, that he did his utmost to discourage that older and more famous one by the prestige of which it was overshadowed. He had cause to regret the treason which, with not very blamable motives perhaps, he had treated the cause of science and intellect. Bologna became his enemy, and it was from Bologna, on the field of Fossalta, that he received the last and most crushing blow. The University went on and prospered. Its schools of medicine became as celebrated as its schools of law, and the seeds which were shed from the venerable tree were carried abroad, fell upon other soil, and sprang up and bore fruit in abundance.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century we hear of Pietro Cipriani of Ravenna as the legal oracle of Italy. But the sceptre was passing from *Æmilia*. We shall see in the history of art during this period, and in the political history of the next, that the region which was the last to catch the flame of genius and the flame of freedom was also

that in which their light was purest and most lasting ; and so it is with science. Tuscany, allowing to her neighbours precedence in order of time, was slow to enter upon the competition ; but when she did, she carried all before her. The successor to the position of Pietro Cipriani was Taddeo Accorso of Florence. Taddeo obtained a reputation which, far transcending that of Cipriani, was not only unquestioned in his day, but has lasted for centuries after his death ; and his statue is to be seen prominent among those of the great men of Florence which I mentioned a few pages back, as reflecting such credit on the art of the nineteenth century. He transmitted his power to his three sons, his worthy successors, in whose hands it was but little impaired. One of them, Francesco Accorso, carried his learning abroad, and is said to have drawn up many of our English statutes by command of Edward the First ; but his place was more than supplied in Italy by his countryman, Dino da Mugello, who attained in the eyes of Italy something approaching to that eminence which had been enjoyed by Taddeo. Just on the verge between the first and second periods of our history, another Tuscan, who owed his birth to Florence and his education to Bologna, followed up with zeal and success the career of a student of medicine, in which he had been preceded by the great Emperor. The high renown which this man, Taddeo Alderotti by name, obtained, was shown by the flattering nickname of “ Hippocrates,” which was applied to him by his admiring contemporaries ; and a still more forcible proof of the confidence which was bestowed upon him may be found in the enormous fees which he was able to exact, and which, to do him justice, he dispensed with a liberality which goes a long way to make up for his extortionateness. The exact sciences advanced *pari passu* with Law and Physic. I have mentioned as one of the members of the Sicilian court Leonardo Fibonacci. Pisa, which was, as we

have seen, at this period the leading city of Tuscany in arms, and, as we shall see, in arts as well, may rest upon his name her claims, if not to pre-eminence, at least to equality with the rest of Tuscany in literature also. The fortunate calamity of having passed his early life far from his own country among the Saracens of Africa, where his father held the office of Consul, developed and encouraged in him a taste for mathematics. Fibonacci was a man of considerable eminence. The lessons of his Mohammedan teachers were not thrown away upon him : he is said to have been the person who introduced into Europe the use of the Arabic numerals ; and to him is attributed, with more certainty, the credit of having invented, or at least imported, the science of algebra. His treatise on the subject is still preserved : it is dedicated to Michael Scott.

But apart from the sciences, practical and abstract, there was, even during this early period, a good deal to show in Northern Italy in the way of literature, properly so called ; and, as before, the order of precedence among the different regions of Italy was Sicily, *Æmilia*, Tuscany. The Sicilian muse, which even in the twelfth century had inspired the strains of Ciullo d'Alcamo, and which had culminated, as we have seen, in the brilliant court of Frederick, found rivals to compete with her for the crown. To give a mere list of the names of the poets who flourished at this period on the banks of the Reno and the Arno would not be very interesting ; and it certainly is not my intention to attempt anything like criticism on their works. Bologna was the first to take up the strain : among her poets the name of Guido Guinicelli may be singled out, as he is the "altro Guido" from whom Oderigi of Agobbio told Dante that "honour had been taken" by his namesake. The process of transferring honour from one Guido to another represents the transfer of poetical pre-eminence from *Æmilia* to Tuscany. But before the appearance of

the second Guido—Guido Cavalcanti—who, indeed, can hardly be considered to belong to this first period, the Tuscan poets had not been mute. The poetic temperament of the people, influenced by the bright atmosphere and the beautiful, fresh scenery of the land wherein they dwelt, and inspired by the echoes which reached them on every hand—the dying notes of Provence and Languedoc, the full-toned music of Sicily, the opening strains of *Æmilia*—found its vent in a burst of poetry which, breaking out in every part of the country, went on swelling and swelling till, not content with taking its part in the general Italian chorus, it drew every sound to itself, and in the next period concentrating itself upon Florence, it culminated in Dante. But this is anticipating. We should have to anticipate still more were we to say anything of Venice. The causes which kept her silent will be touched upon in speaking of her art, where they fall to be considered with more propriety. Lombardy, at least that part of it which lies to the north of the Po, contributed but little to Italian literature; in fact, I cannot call to mind anything. The nearest approach is in Eastern Lombardy or Venetia, where flourished the great University of Padua. Genoa, vastly different from Lombardy, and in some respects more like Tuscany, was under influences which made her, like the former, backward in civilisation. She produced historians, but hardly a poet or a philosopher, for Prinzivalle Doria, who was a poet of no mean power, seems rather to belong to the second period. But leaving out the less brilliant members of the Italian nation, enough remains to show that even between 1150 and 1250 there was much to foreshadow the literary greatness that was to come, and that, with regard to poetry in particular, a worthy chorus of voices arose from three several regions, blending with one another and yet distinct, to dignify that great epoch which marks the separation between the first and second periods of the history of Italy.

It remains to touch upon the arts. As lately suggested, the February of art coincides in time with the political May, and the period I have just been speaking of witnesses the effects of the great ecclesiastical conflict upon the Italian mind, in the first attempts to shake off the Byzantine torpor and break the Byzantine yoke. It was obvious that the awakened spirit of religious and patriotic enthusiasm could not long submit to be trammelled by the lifeless forms in which art had been content to invest itself hitherto, and a new style arose, which was free from the weakness of the four last centuries, without falling back into the barbarous rudeness of the fifth and sixth. Following at a due distance the order of the historical revival, the improvement appears first at Rome, in the mosaics of S. Clemente and Sta. Maria in Trastevere. The next place where it appears is Venice. Venice, as has been seen, and as might have been expected, adhered more closely and constantly to the Byzantine school than any other part of Italy, and it might have been supposed that the new Italian spirit would leave her untouched ; but, towards the close of the twelfth century, she was, as has been said, brought closely in contact with the politics of the Peninsula, and for a moment forgot her relations with the Eastern despotism, and remembered that she was Italian and a republic. The effect upon her art was instantaneous. In the mosaics of the Capella Zeno in St Mark's, which belong to this period, there is discernible not so much an improvement as a new birth. It might have seemed that the honour of leading the van in the revival was reserved for the great city of the Adriatic ; but the fourth crusade, which occurred immediately afterwards, had the effect of fixing her attention exclusively on the East for more than a hundred years ; her art retrograded, or at least made no further advance, till the renewal of her connection with Italy infused into it again the spirit of the West ; and the name of the master by whom those mosaics were de-

signed, one who might have been the Buschetto or Nicola Pisano of Venice, has completely perished. At the same time that Venice cut herself off from connection with Italy, the crusade which the Church proclaimed against civilisation and intellect in Languedoc and Sicily, met with its appropriate result, and art languished and died at Rome. Several times in after ages did later Pontiffs attempt to encourage a school of art by importations from Tuscany or from Umbria : but all those attempts failed ; and no foreign graft, however rich and promising, has ever been able to strike root in that luckless soil, or contend against the curse of sterility which, ever since the days of the two Innocents, has weighed with such an appearance of poetical justice upon the fancy and the intellect, the literature and the art, of the city of the Popes.

Thus, then, to borrow a metaphor from the turf, of the two horses which had started first in the race of Italian art, the foremost had been thrown down and lamed by the fault of his rider, and the second had bolted off the course. But fresh competitors were not wanting. First in the race, less perhaps in consequence of her own qualities than in consequence of favouring circumstances, came Sicily. The barbarism which had for so many centuries submerged Northern Italy in common with the rest of Europe, left many islets standing above the flood to the south of the Liris ; and beyond the Straits, except during the ephemeral dominion of the Ostrogoths, its influence was hardly felt at all. There the Byzantines, who, if they could not rival, could at least preserve, the artistic glories of the Empire, the traditions of which they inherited, held their ground with desperate tenacity ; and when at last they were forced to give way, their place was taken by races which had already made considerable advances in cultivation—the Saracens and the Normans. There, consequently, might be seen, but more thoroughly and fully, that collision of the spirit of the North

and the spirit of the East in a land enriched by copious remnants of an older civilisation, which Ruskin describes as having taken place at Venice; and there had the children of the country an advantage which Venice never knew, in the possession of numerous relics of the architecture of ancient Greece. Above all, it was there that Frederick the Second found his most favoured home. During the reign of that sovereign, therefore, we hear of great advances in architecture, sculpture, and painting. Frederick himself had a great taste and talent for the first of these arts, and himself gave designs for, and superintended the erection of, many buildings, which he afterwards caused to be decorated with statues, mosaics, and frescoes, the work of artists anterior to, and probably quite unconnected with, Antelami and Biduino, Torrita and Tafi, Guido of Siena and Giunta of Pisa. Architectural fragments, I believe, still remain to attest the taste and munificence of their builder; but, thanks to the Popes and the French, and still more to the neglect which has been their lot among a people degraded by centuries of subsequent misrule, the sculptures and paintings have disappeared for ever. Attempts were made by the Angevin princes afterwards to restore art at Naples as their patrons the Popes did at Rome, but with no better success.

Although the fate of the civilisation of Sicily in the thirteenth century is almost the most melancholy event in history, yet in one point of view it may be regarded as having been a good thing. It was a good thing that the task of restoring the fine arts was by it left entirely to the Northern Italians, who not only were (and I think I may say *are*) a race possessed of far higher qualities, but who also were enabled, or rather compelled, by their position, to work out their development in that as in other respects for themselves, and owed nothing to Court favour or patronage. The artistic development of this part of the Peninsula, like that of its central and southern regions, runs parallel with that

of its literature. Northern Lombardy did nothing, or next to nothing. Milan, like Turin at the present day, was content to play the part of Sparta in the war of national independence, without aspiring to that of Athens also. Perhaps the curse which has attached to Rome and Naples pressed upon her; certainly it is noticeable that the two cities of Northern Italy, Milan and Genoa, which were foremost at that period in the cause of the Popes, are also the two which have never possessed a school of art of native origin. But *Æ*milia began to claim her place in the revival. While law and physic, romance and poetry, were dawning upon Bologna, sculpture and painting made their appearance at Parma, and did so about the time that the successful defence of that city against the most strenuous efforts of Frederick the Second gave the first great check to that prince's career, and rendered it impossible for him to effect the conquest of Lombardy. It was then that the first important advance upon the grotesque bas-reliefs with which the early Lombards decorated the outsides of their churches was made by the Parmesan sculptor Antelami, whose works were the astonishment and admiration of his contemporaries, at the same time that the walls of the baptistery were covered with paintings of an entirely new style. The reaction against Byzantine lifelessness which those paintings attest, seems to have been carried in the first instance too far; they appear to be violent and exaggerated, both in design and colour. In fact, Lombard art may almost seem to have exhausted itself by the violence of its early struggles before its forces were sufficiently matured, and it fell back into a torpor from which it was long ere it attempted to rise.

The course was thus left clear for Tuscany. It is in Tuscany more than anywhere else that the parallel spoken of as existing between history and art can be clearly and distinctly shown, almost each one of its leading cities having had a school of art of its own, which rose and fell in almost

exact accordance with its political vicissitudes. Lucca is the only exception, and perhaps we may hereafter find a reason for this. Pisa, as we have seen, was at this period far beyond her sister republics both in power and wealth, and, as we have also seen, she headed the movement which called into existence the new school of architecture. She was destined to do the same for sculpture and for painting. It is at S. Piero in Grado, within her territory, that the earliest paintings are found which are free from the taint of Byzantine influence; and the first Tuscan sculptors whose names are recorded in connection with the native Italian school—Bonanno and Biduino—were her citizens. But her supremacy was not long uncontested; Guido of Siena shares with Giunta of Pisa the honour of standing first in order of time on the long list of Italian painters, and his countryman and contemporary, Giacomo da Torrita, achieved the crowning glory of Italian mosaic, an art in which he has never been surpassed, or probably rivalled. A third competitor was not far behind. It was not ten years after her first appearance in the field of Italian politics in consequence of the fatal marriage of Buondelmonti, that Florence undertook the great work of incrusting the baptistery of St John with mosaics. The direction was intrusted, in the first instance, to Torrita,* assisted by Apollonius of Venice: but Florence was not to remain long indebted for her art to foreigners, and another great mosaicist of native extraction, Andrea Tafi, was associated in the work, which before long was left entirely in his hands, and in its completion remains the earliest specimen of that great school which was to eclipse all others in the world; but the *painters* of Florence, properly so called, are not to appear till the following period.

* I have followed Lord Lindsay in attributing the commencement of these mosaics to Torrita. Kugler ascribes them to a monk, Jacobus, who, he seems to imply, was a Florentine.

All these attempts to sprout forth belong to the season of winter. But that of spring was rapidly approaching ; the new Romanesque style of Italy was to be as completely superseded as the Byzantine had been before it ; and, as of yore, the glory of the revival belongs to Pisa. Her great artist, Nicola Pisano, who achieved for sculpture, and, indirectly, for painting, what Buschetto had achieved for architecture, may be held as belonging either to this or to the following period, as the year 1250 is about the centre of his career ; but it will be simpler to look upon him as belonging to the latter : and having just noticed his existence, I shall consider the period of the struggle for national independence to coincide in point of time with the period in art which reflects the older War of Investitures—the period of the Romanesque.

CHAPTER IV.

*The Period of Summer—The Struggle of Liberty against Tyranny
—First Half-Century—Clearing the Decks for Action.*



THE second period of Italian history commences with the year 1250, and lasts till 1400. Like its predecessor, it has its leading idea and its central city; but both the one and the other are changed. The struggle for national independence is over; the emperors have ceased to threaten it, and no one else has begun to do so; and with that struggle the task of Milan as the champion of freedom is done. A darker and fiercer conflict is to take its place—it is to be carried on by the Italians alone; and we shall see that its animating principle is the preservation of republican liberty against tyranny, and that its nucleus and rallying point is Florence. Like the former period, too, this has its subdivisions; and each of those subdivisions includes a space of half a century, and is marked by a distinctive character of its own.

The first of these extends from A.D. 1250 till the close of the century. It may be briefly described as the first month of the Italian summer, the period of preparation. And now commences that great series of complications and separate interests which have made Italian history so hopeless a labyrinth to those who have not the clue which might enable them to thread its mazes. Closely united by one

common object in the first period, the Italian republics seem, now that object is attained, to fall asunder like a faggot of sticks when the band is taken off. Keeping constantly before us the fact that the great struggle of liberty against tyranny is preparing, we shall try and collect the scattered sticks and lay them in order, ready to be tied up again in bundles when we come to the second subdivision. We shall take first in order the most exalted personages—the Popes, the Emperors, and the Kings of Sicily.

I think I have said that the thirteenth century was the era of the greatest power of the Popes. The Pontiff who gave that power its final lift was reigning in 1200, and the Pontiff in whom it met its first check was reigning in 1300. The table-land, however, of ecclesiastical splendour is not quite level: there is an incline in it upwards and downwards; and the highest point of the incline, like the apex of a roof on the top of a tower, or a cairn on a Scotch mountain, is symmetrically placed in the very centre of the century, in the pontificate of Sinibald of the great Genoese house of Fieschi, Innocent the Fourth. That Pontiff's entry into Italy from France after Frederick's death was a complete triumphal progress. The Ghibellines were abashed and silent, and the Guelfs vied with each other in enthusiastic demonstrations of reverential homage. To all Europe, and probably to himself, he seemed to be on the very pinnacle of earthly, and more than earthly, greatness. The truer instinct of the ancient Greeks would have looked on that imposing spectacle with a trembling foreboding of the Nemesis of the gods. For a while, however, all went well. The short life of Conrad, Frederick's son, gave him no time, even if he had possessed the ability, to renew the old strife; and during the infancy of his successor, the young Conradin, Innocent took advantage of the weakness of the government to seize upon the southern kingdom as a fief of the Holy See, thereby converting the stronghold of Ghibellinism

into a bulwark of the Church. It was then that the Popes first began to possess temporal power. They had long waged a dubious fight with the Empire for the "Patrimony of St Peter" and the heritage of the Countess Matilda, but they had never exercised a direct sovereignty, such as Innocent attempted in the kingdom of Sicily; and it was then that they definitely abandoned the party of freedom, with which up to that time they had generally, whether from sympathy or from selfish interest, been connected, to embrace that of tyranny. It is curious that this change in the position and the policy of the Papacy should coincide so exactly with the commencement of its decline—a fact which militates not a little against the theory of the modern defenders of the Pope's temporalities as necessary for the free exercise of his spiritual power. I think the Popes of the thirteenth century, speaking generally, the most detestable characters in history. I confess I feel towards them something as nearly approaching to personal hatred as it is possible to feel towards people who lived so long ago; but I must say for them that it would be impossible to entertain for them such an aversion if it were mixed with anything approaching to contempt, and I can conceive the sort of scorn with which that theory would have been regarded by them. Innocent the Third, without an acre of territory, and surrounded in his own city by the magistrates of an independent republic, whose protection he had no idea of changing into subservience, saw all the princes of Europe in succession at his feet, and crushed an entire nation and an entire civilisation by a word of his mouth: Innocent the Fourth, victorious over the Empire in a way that none of his predecessors had been, submitted to reside in Rome against his wish, in obedience to the dictates of the republican podesta; and it would not a little have astonished either of those great men to have been told that they could not fulminate a bull of excommunication except under the

protection of their own soldiers and their own police. The towering ambition of the latter and of some of his successors prompted them to seize temporal authority when the opportunity offered, on the principle of letting no means escape them of swelling their power and their grandeur ; but I cannot help thinking that, if certain treatises written by controversialists of the Roman Church in defence of the "Temporalities" had appeared A.D. 1250, their authors would have stood a fair chance of being burned as heretics. This is a digression.

How completely selfish, and void of all sympathy with the principle of freedom, had been the support which Gregory the Ninth and Innocent the Fourth had extended to that principle in its final struggle with the Empire, was soon made manifest by the latter's conduct in the kingdom of Naples. The contrast with the rule of the Hohenstaufen princes became grievously apparent, and the persecution which the Pope directed against the gallant young Manfred, brother of the late sovereign, and regent during the minority of his nephew Conradin, gave the discontented subjects a chief. Manfred's history sounds like a romance. It is a long time since I read it in Sismondi ; but one can hardly help recollecting how, after a long course of outrages and insults suffered from the Pope's officials, he fled to the wilds just in time to escape being arrested : how he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains : how, deserted by all his friends, he arrived after countless dangers, alone, under the walls of Luceria : how he crept with difficulty under the close-barred gates, and was raised from the ground with transports of affection and exultation by his father's faithful Saracens : how, surrounded by them, he unfurled the banner of his house, and summoned the lieges to rise against the usurper ; and, finally, how, having driven the Papalists before him by the mere terror of his presence, and swept the kingdom from sea to sea, he reassumed the

regency, and afterwards, at the urgent instances of his subjects, suffered himself to be invested with the crown. One is sorry that Innocent did not live to see this ; he had been carried to the grave in the full tide of prosperity and at the very height of glory about a month before Manfred's revolt broke out ; and Nemesis reserved herself for a much less worthy victim, his successor. That successor, Alexander the Fourth, though a member of the same illustrious family which had already given to the Church Innocent the Third and Gregory the Ninth, had probably not the unscrupulousness and certainly not the abilities of either of those great Pontiffs ; and it is in his time that the decline of the Papal power first begins to show. Innocent had bequeathed to him a spiritual power greater than that formerly held by Gregory the Seventh, and a temporal dominion greater than that held afterwards by Julius the Second ; and Alexander's pontificate witnessed the diminution of the first and the total loss of the second. Urban the Fourth, the next Pope, determined to raise the power of the Church to its old pre-eminence : if he could not have the southern kingdom, he would at least have vengeance on the house of Hohenstaufen and its heretical subjects : if his censures were disregarded by the Italians, he would correct their unfaithfulness by introducing new blood from beyond the Alps ; and both these objects might be attained by urging the French prince, Charles of Anjou, to effect the conquest of Naples. Charles of Anjou was one of that class in whom the Popes, whether for good or evil, have always found their readiest instruments. Distinguished for courage even among the princes of the house of Capet, able, ambitious, relentless towards his enemies, a zealous enforcer of the Christian religion in every way except in his own practice, a devoted servant of the Church, an uncompromising foe to infidels and heretics, exalted in his aims, unscrupulous as to means, he had looked with abhorrence on the resusci-

tation of the Ghibelline party in defiance of the Church ; and he entered enthusiastically into the plans of Urban, which promised at once to satisfy his fighting instincts and his love of adventure, secure his salvation in the next world, and place on his head the crown of the wealthiest kingdom in Europe in this. Urban died before the invasion could take place ; but his successor, Clement the Fourth, was animated by the same spirit, and Charles, under his auspices, entered Italy. His success was rapid and complete. Manfred, deserted by his treacherous or cowardly Apulian soldiers, fell sword in hand amid the rout of Grandella ; and the gallant attempt of Conradin to recover his father's throne, and avenge his uncle's fall, led through a yet more flagrant treason to a yet sadder fate. The iniquitous execution, after a mock trial, of that brave young prince, who, at the age of seventeen, had displayed a courage and talents worthy of the house to which he belonged, is the most mournful scene in that most tragic of dramas. The guilt of that murder, which excited the indignation of the French themselves, rests entirely on the shoulders of the Pope, by whom it was counselled and enjoined.

So ended the long strife between the Popes and the Hohenstaufens. The unrelenting hatred of the Church was at length satisfied ; the long series of crimes by which its cause had been stained had been crowned by the greatest of them all ; and Clement, his task being completed in this final triumph, was summoned by death only one month after the last of the Hohenstaufens had poured out his blood on the scaffold. Among the numerous sins for which the Roman Curia of that age is answerable, though it is somewhat difficult to fix the order of precedence among them, I am disposed to think that this calling of the French into Italy is the greatest.* The Popes have often been called the evil genius

* It will be seen afterwards that I call the Albigensian war the greatest crime of the *Dugentista* popedom. But, besides the fact that that great

of Italy, and often most deservedly, but never more deservedly than on this occasion. It is not merely that they destroyed the chance of an Italian union under the sceptre of Manfred, of which there was a considerable promise : it is probable that Italy was not yet ripe for such a consummation : it is not merely that their act caused the substitution of a cruel for a beneficent government, and gave over a rising civilisation to be crushed by barbarians ; but it is principally that from this act have sprung, by a distinct sequence, almost all the miseries of the Peninsula in after ages, as almost all those miseries have originated in the rival claims to the Neapolitan kingdom of Anjou and Aragon, of France and Austria.

The characters of the Popes by whom the contest which was thus terminated was waged, present a remarkable uniformity. As before in the eleventh, and afterwards in the sixteenth century, the Roman Church, beset by a formidable antagonist, rose with the occasion, and placed at its head in succession a series of chiefs worthy of the post: they were men (the same description will apply to almost all) of great intellectual power, unconquerable energy, and perfect singleness of purpose, pursuing the aggrandisement of their order with undying constancy, forsaking for that object all considerations of selfish or family advancement, and disregarding for its sake all ideas alike of fear, of justice, and of mercy. The contest ended with Conradin and Clement ; and with their deaths a change came over the character of the Papal See. Clement's successor was, though a Pope of the thirteenth century, and (what was equally strange) though his name

iniquity may be slightly palliated by its having been waged for the suppression of heresy, and not for the sake of selfish aggrandisement or the gratification of revenge, many of the horrors by which it was accompanied are not chargeable on the Popes, who indeed were much shocked by them, and made sincere though tardy efforts for their mitigation. Besides, the evil results of the Albigensian Crusade have not coloured subsequent history as Charles's invasion of Sicily has done.

was Visconti, a man of humane and moderate character. Great part of his life had been passed in Syria, removed from the influence of the Roman court and the complications of Guelf and Ghibelline politics ; and he could afford to look upon himself rather as the common father of Christendom than as the head of the Guelfs, and to direct his efforts less towards the predominance of his party than towards its reconciliation with its rivals. I was interested at Arezzo to see the monument of this estimable Pope : his recumbent effigy seemed to me to express, not so much the character of benevolence, as that of straightforward conscientiousness, guided by intellect of a high order, exhausting itself in efforts to attain an object, and feeling those efforts to be fruitless. Such, indeed, they were. Urban and Clement had sown the wind, and their successors were to reap the whirlwind. The spirit of faction which was abroad all through Italy had been so goaded by every Pope since the century began, that it could not be stayed even by the terrors of excommunication ; and worse than all, it was becoming daily more clear that the notable scheme for changing the dynasty in the Sicilies had relieved the Papacy from an enemy, but had given it a master, and that Charles's little finger was thicker than Manfred's waist. The exertions which Gregory made for peace were continued by his successors upon the purest principles of self-preservation, and the aim of the Papal policy now was to reinvigorate the fallen party of the Ghibellines ; but the Popes of that day had not the disinterested singlemindedness which Gregory the Tenth had displayed in a good, and his predecessors in a bad cause. The interests of the families from which they sprang, or with which they were allied, shared their attention in at least an equal degree with those of the Church ; and, consequently, while the great Roman houses of Savelli,* Orsini, and

* This is rather too baldly stated. The Pope to whom the aggrandisement of the house of Savelli was due was Honorius the Third, whose

Colonna, fostered in turn by successive occupants of St Peter's chair, rose to a height of power and splendour which placed them far above all their rivals, Charles's supremacy remained. Nicholas the Third, the Orsini Pope, was, it is true, a man of considerable talent, and contrived to curtail it to some extent while he lived; but his successor, a Frenchman, who took the name of Martin the Fourth, so far from continuing the same policy, appeared to make it his object to reverse the legal relation in which the Popes and the Kings of Sicily stood to one another, and acted as if the Holy See were a fief of the Neapolitan Crown. But during his pontificate, even when the Angevin prosperity was highest, and its dominion over Italy far greater than that of the Emperors had ever been, seemed to threaten the absorption of the whole Peninsula into one kingdom, with the Pope as its first bishop, it was checked and crippled by a blow from an unexpected quarter.

I have before said that the new dominion which was established in the southern kingdom was a harsh and cruel one; and its harshness and cruelty were most fully developed in the island of Sicily. Sicily had been the residence of Frederick, and the principal seat of that rising civilisation. It had profited by it both materially and intellectually. It was here, therefore, that the change was likely to be most keenly felt; and it was here that the conquerors indulged most freely in the vices which power and success engender. The rapacity, licentiousness, brutality, with which the French conducted themselves on the mainland, were here displayed in their most aggravated form. I have not by me Amari's '*History of the Sicilian Vespers*,' and I cannot recall it sufficiently to go into details; but I think I am not far

pontificate preceded that of Gregory the Ninth. The mildness of that Pope's character, as well as his nepotism, seem to belong rather to the second than to the first half of the century. He was, however, a staunch supporter of the pretensions of his See.

wrong in saying that, from the days of Phalaris and Dionysius to those of the Bourbons of this century, such misrule and tyranny were never known in that unfortunate island. The inhabitants were of a different temper from that of their mainland brethren; there was mingled in their composition a good deal of the fiery spirit of the Arabs, and a good deal of the hatred of oppression of the Normans; and they were maddened beyond measure by a treatment which might have roused even a far tamer race to resistance. An insult offered by a French soldier to a Palermitan girl caused a sudden outbreak at the capital: the news spread like lightning; and before the ruling class could well realise that there was any danger, the whole island was in a conflagration of revolt. The French, surprised before they had time to draw together for self-defence, were everywhere overpowered and massacred; and almost within a week from the first explosion, Sicily was free. She conferred her crown upon Pedro, King of Aragon, the husband of Manfred's daughter, and the man to whom Conradin with his last words had bequeathed the charge of revenging his blood. He had been some time before stirred up by an illustrious exile, John of Procida, to fulfil that charge, which appealed alike to his honour and his interest; and he had no hesitation in satisfying both by accepting the splendid gift. All the rest of Charles's life was employed in the fruitless struggle to recover the throne he had thus lost. The Sicilians, allied with the Aragonese, became masters of the sea; Pedro's admiral, the Calabrian Ruggiero di Loria, the first of the great names in naval warfare of which Italy may be proud, defeated Charles's fleet in several actions, and took his son prisoner; and Charles, chafing with fruitless rage against these repeated reverses and humiliations, which stung his proud spirit to the quick, was seized with an illness brought on by his mental irritation, which carried him to the grave. And thus was the vengeance of Sicily

wrought on the hand that smote; the head which directed the blow was for the present unscathed. It would be foreign to my subject to pursue the island's history further. Its battle for liberty did not conclude with Charles's death. On the contrary, that event seemed only to increase her danger, and call for greater sacrifices. The French dynasty of Naples was aided by the mother country and supported by the Church. The house of Aragon, with unpardonable selfishness and ingratitude, not only deserted the Sicilian cause, but actually allied itself with the enemy; and the genius and fortune of Loria himself were transferred to the hostile camp. But the patriotic islanders would not be conquered. Amidst danger and difficulty, amidst treachery and desertion, against overpowering enemies, against the swords of the French, the fleets of Aragon, the thunders of the Church, against the victorious energy of Loria, undismayed by constant defeat, by the loss of their command of the sea, by the frightful drain on their finances, by the entire ruin of their commerce, without a fleet, without an ally, they fought on, deriving energy from despair when hope was gone, till their enemies, wearied out, desisted from the contest. A more gallant and a more blameless struggle for the independence of a nation has never been waged; and Sicily has deserved a better fate in after ages than that which it has been the duty of history to record.

I have been somewhat too prolix in relating a series of events which are, strictly speaking, apart from the history of the Italian republics, and which do not come into any parallel with that of their art. The interest of the story and its dramatic character, which I wish I could have brought out better, have led me on. I am almost surprised that I have not narrated it at greater length.

We have seen that the continuation and conclusion of the conflict between the Popes and the Hohenstaufens is connected solely with Southern Italy. After the death of

Frederick, the Empire, in the name of which it had commenced, lost all concern with, and became indifferent to it. Up to the middle of the thirteenth century there is a unity of idea about German history ; the four great dynasties which in succession had represented on the Imperial throne the four nations of which Germany was at that time composed, were animated by a similar spirit, contended for or against the same principles, represented identical or opposing interests ; the Saxon and Bavarian lines may be said to have represented Guelfism, those of Franconia and Swabia Ghibellinism ; but the Billungs, the Wibelungs, the Welfs, and the Hohenstaufens, had alike disappeared ; * and after a period of confusion and anarchy of nearly twenty-five years, during which the electors vainly sought to revive the Cæsarean majesty by placing at their head a Spanish or an English prince, the Empire emerged in an entirely new form, and with entirely new ideas ; new men, whose names had hitherto been merely known as those of powerful nobles, were to contend for supremacy, — the Hapsburgs of Austria, the Wittelsbachs of Bavaria, the Luxemburgs of Bohemia ; and though still proudly claiming to be the Kaisers of the Holy Roman Empire, they began to be generally called, what in practice they acted as if they were, only the Emperors of Germany, and becoming absorbed with Transalpine interests, entirely to neglect Italy. A proof of this altered state of things was given by the founder of the first of these new families, Rodolf of Hapsburg. Charlemagne, in order to give to the Papal See, which was at once the episcopal chair of the capital of his empire, and the great patriarchate of Western Christendom, a sufficiency of means to keep up a becoming dignity before

* Disappeared, I mean, of course, as claimants for the Empire of Germany. The Welfs of Brunswick have been destined to hold as proud a position as, and sway a wider dominion than, those the pursuit of which they now abandoned in despair.

the world, had conferred upon it the "*dominium utile*," as it was called, or, in other words, the right to enjoy the revenues of certain territories, answering pretty nearly to what in modern times have been called the "Legations," thereby confirming a previous donation of Pepin. Of course this right could only exist as long as the Emperor's authority in those provinces was directly exercised, upon the principle that no one can give what he has not got himself; and it gave the Popes neither the suzerainty, which belonged to the Empire, nor the right to interfere with the local governments, which, as far as they were not controlled by the Imperial lieutenants, were in the hands of the people themselves.* The limits between these two conflicting authorities were fixed by the treaty of Constance, and after that date the sole claim which the Popes could legally found was to have handed over to them the moneys which were, or ought to have been, paid annually as tribute by the cities in those districts to the Imperial exchequer. But with this moderate advantage they had long ceased to be content: they pretended to be entitled, in the name of the Church, to hold those territories in full sovereignty: they supported that pretension by promulgating, or suffering to be promulgated, the monstrous fiction of the donation of Constantine; and they perverted the munificence of the Frank princes into an admission of its validity. It is needless to say that the Emperors had never allowed that interpretation; nor do I think that they had ever been expected to do so. The ignorance of their traditionary rights, and the indifference to Italian affairs, which now prevailed at the Imperial court, appeared to pre-

* I am not quite sure that this is the whole truth. Charlemagne undoubtedly granted more than the "*dominium utile*." It is difficult to say *what* it was that he granted exactly. But it is hardly to be supposed that he would have gone through the superfluous form of granting the "*dominium utile*" of what he granted in full sovereignty. And, besides, there is no appearance of the Popes having made the smallest attempt or pretence to exercise such sovereignty at the time.

sent a favourable opportunity for getting the claim admitted ; it was put forward and pressed with the utmost craft, supported by the most audacious falsifications of history, and enforced with all the sanctions of religion, by the wily diplomatists of the Church ; and at length Rodolf, engaged in a formidable war beyond the Alps, and dreading the guilt of committing a sacrilegious usurpation, surrendered the whole of the point at issue, a concession which any of his predecessors, Guelf or Ghibelline, would have cut off their right hands sooner than have made.* It is from this period that the suzerainty of the Popes over their Æmilian dominions commences ; we shall see afterwards how they acquired the sovereignty. I must say I wish this rather dirty transaction had been carried through by Clement the murderer of Conradin, or the sycophant Martin the Fourth ; it would leave their characters not much blacker than they are already ; but amid the general dearth of good men as occupants of the see of St Peter in this century, it is to be regretted that the stain should tarnish the otherwise tolerably reputable fame of Nicholas the Third.†

I turn to Northern Italy ; and here, though events are more thickly crowded together, and though they more directly affect my subject, it will be possible to state them more concisely.

The first thing that strikes the reader of the history of this period is the gradual transformation which takes place in all the cities of the valley of the Po. Those cities, which braved every danger to resist tyranny, when she came as an open enemy wearing the Imperial crown and supported by tradition and law, clasped her to their bosoms when she assumed the guise of a friend and a servant. It

* See Note, page 477.

† It must, however, be admitted that the fame of Pope Nicholas is somewhat marred by the stains of simony and nepotism. Dante finds him in Malebolge hanging with his head downward, and his feet scorched by undying fire, as a punishment for the former vice : let the subsequent greatness of the house of Orsini bear testimony to the latter.

was like the enchantresses of fiction ; she seemed to have cast a spell over those whom she enthralled, so that they believed her to be an angel of light ; and even when she cast aside the mask, and revealed her hideous lineaments in all their horror, fresh votaries kept casting themselves at her feet. Before the Lombard League had achieved its work of overthrowing the Emperor's Italian dominion, the house of Romano had established in the Veronese March, or, as we should now call it, Venetia, an arbitrary rule which, uniting measureless ambition with consummate ability, they succeeded in expanding into something approaching to an empire, giving thereby the first example of those formidable combinations which were to play so great a part in the history of the following century ; and this empire they ruled with a lawlessness and cruelty surpassing anything that had been known since the days of Caracalla. So tamed had been the spirit of those proud and high-minded republics, that they submitted, without attempting to resist, almost without murmuring ; and even when all the rest of Northern Italy, horror-struck at Eccelino's monstrous crimes, had gathered itself against him—when the Church had preached a crusade for his destruction—when even Venice had been roused from her isolation to interfere for an instant in the affairs of the mainland—when even the other tyrants of Lombardy, revolted by his atrocities and trembling for their own independence, had joined the league of liberty, they waited for their deliverance to be achieved by the hands of strangers, and stirred neither hand nor foot to do anything for themselves. So little reaction was produced, and so completely in that short time had the capacity for freedom been lost, that upon Eccelino's overthrow by the crusaders, Verona, his capital, restored to freedom by no exertion of her own, could only seek her happiness in a change of servitude, and conferred herself in absolute and perpetual dominion upon the family of La Scala,

who being Ghibellines had not even the nominal advantage of differing from Eccelino in the politics of their faction.

It might have been thought that Milan, the haughty and arrogant republican city, would have scorned to yield to any one of lesser degree the homage which she had refused to the Empire ; and that the sight at her very door of the sufferings of her sister cities who had submitted to Eccelino, would have excited in her a fresh and increased loathing for tyranny and Ghibellinism : but the insolence and ingratitude with which Innocent the Fourth, after the death of Frederick, multiplied exactions upon her at a moment when she was crippled by the sacrifices she had made in his cause, gave a foothold to the latter ; and the services which she had received in the late wars from the house of La Torre, by accustoming her to look for protection to a single family, paved the way for the former. To that family was confided the military command of the civic armies, in order that their raw levies might have the advantage of experienced leaders, and the assistance of the trained cavalry which they could bring into the field ; they were allowed to assume the supreme judicial authority, in order that the factions which disturbed the peace, and the conspiracies which endangered the independence of the city, might be controlled and baffled by a central power ; and, in order that there might be sufficient might and stability in that power to enable it to keep a firm hand on the spirit of disorder, these offices were conferred for a term of years, or even for life. It took the Lombards some little time to find out that the union for these excellent reasons of all these different functions in the same person constituted that person a tyrant. The chiefs of the house of La Torre, lords of Milan, soon, following the example of those of Romano, aspired to found an empire. The boldness and success with which they pursued this policy aroused the alarm and jealousy of the Popes ; and with what appears almost a

judicial blindness, the latter sought to check them by conferring the archbishopric of Milan on a member of the rival house of Visconti. It was a most unfortunate selection. Otho, such was the archbishop's name, possessed the qualities which perhaps had been, and certainly afterwards became, hereditary in his family—craft, ambition, clearness of mental vision, wideness of views, inscrutability, regardlessness of means, indifference to ecclesiastical censures. He succeeded in overthrowing the ruling dynasty, in order to establish himself in the saddle with a firmer seat and a tighter hand than they had ever had; and the Popes soon became painfully aware that they had undermined a dynasty of lukewarm Guelfs to install in their place a far more formidable one of thorough-paced Ghibellines.

While such was the fate of Verona, the foundress of the League of Lombardy, and of Milan, its most active and powerful member, it could hardly be expected that the surrounding states should escape the contagion to which they had succumbed. The process which I have just described as having led to the formation of tyranny at Milan was designedly stated in general terms, as it applies with the same truth to nearly every other city in Lombardy. The great feudal lords of the valley of the Po and the outskirts of the Alps, the Marquises of Este, Pallavicini, and Montferrat, the Counts of Savoy and San Bonifazio, associated themselves with several of the cities, first as allies and afterwards as masters. Intrigue or force of character enabled other nobles of lesser power and importance to place themselves in a similar position with regard to others. The same spectacle was presented by the free cities of Romagna, in almost every one of which was set up a tyranny, less powerful indeed, but not less absolute and not less cruel; and at the end of the century there remained only one state in Lombardy, and only one state in *Æ*milia, which could

pretend to the title of a republic. Those two states were Padua and Bologna ; and this fact should be noted, as we shall see its effect in the history of the arts.

These two exceptions rendered still more striking the general rule of servitude which prevailed over the whole of the great plain of Northern Italy ; and freedom, expelled from that wide and fertile region where she had reigned and triumphed so boisterously fifty years before, was driven to take refuge under cover of fastnesses, amid the lagoons of the Adriatic, and behind the continuous chain of the Maritime Alps and the Apennines. She thus retained two separate abodes—Venice, with her subordinate townships, and Tuscany, with her numerous republics—while the cities of Genoa and Pisa, connected by geographical position with the latter and by their history and character with the former, are in a kind of way a link which unites the whole together in idea, though, as we shall see, not in practice.

Foremost, at the beginning of the half-century in question, among the states of Italy which still aspired to be free, was the republic of Pisa. Superior to Venice in the extent of her mainland possessions, superior to Genoa in that of her colonial empire, superior to both in Italian sympathies and in intellectual cultivation, the widely extended commerce and powerful fleets in which she was rivalled by them gave to Pisa the first place also among the cities of Tuscany. Her politics were entirely Ghibelline ; she had received numerous substantial marks of regard and confidence from the Hohenstaufen Emperors, and requited them with a devoted and unselfish attachment which has always appeared to me one of the most pleasing portions of Italian history. Through her exertions the flag of Frederick the Second, amid all his reverses on the mainland, was triumphant upon the seas ; she continued the same loyalty to Frederick's descendants ; she strained her resources to aid the expedition of Conradin ;

and many of her bravest and noblest citizens sacrificed their lives in his cause on the field and on the scaffold. It might have been expected that she would have assisted in the vengeance of that house, even as she had shared in its sufferings ; but at the time of the Sicilian Vespers, she was engaged in a struggle for life and death with Genoa. The two great maritime cities, divided by a constant jealousy, had been frequently at war with each other before : but all the former struggles had been child's play in comparison with this one ; and at length, in the same year that Loria, in command of the Sicilian fleet, destroyed that of Charles and took his son prisoner, the Pisans were defeated by their rivals in the decisive battle of Meloria, on the very spot at which, forty years before, they had triumphed over them in the cause of Frederick, and prevented for the time the assembling of a general council for that prince's excommunication. The blow was a crushing one. The resources of both cities had been taxed to the uttermost by this fearful war ; and Pisa, distracted by her landward difficulties, and weakened by her exertions on behalf of Conradin, could ill bear up against the strain. Her noble and wealthy citizens rivalled each other in the sacrifices they made for the defence of their country ; and a great portion of the fleet which was defeated at Meloria was equipped by private munificence. A still greater act of patriotic self-devotion was performed by a number of them, comprising the most illustrious names of the republic, who, taken prisoners at Meloria, preferred languishing in an ungentle and hopeless captivity to allowing their country to be weakened at such a moment by the cost of their ransom. Sismondi, with a just pride, exhibits his own ancestors in both these classes of patriots. But all was in vain. Prostrated by this tremendous overthrow, and bleeding at every pore, Pisa could no longer continue the contest, and the maritime supremacy of the Western Mediterranean remained to Genoa. Victorious in the West,

Genoa endeavoured to extend her supremacy to the East ; her aggressions in this direction brought her, nothing loth, into collision with Venice. That power, timid and hesitating in her relations with Italy, was bold and resolute in resisting encroachments on what she considered her peculiar province ; and the aggressiveness of the one and the tenacity of the other produced hostile sentiments which soon flamed forth into open war. It was not the first time that Venice and Genoa had drawn the sword upon each other. Thirty years before, an accidental dispute about some rights in the city of Tyre had driven them to arms. The strife had troubled all Christendom. The crusade which St Louis, King of France, was wishing to head, was stayed for want of the co-operation of the Venetian and Genoese fleets ; and at length the combined voice of Europe, headed by that of the Pope, persuaded them to sink for a while their mutual hatred for the cause of religion and of the Holy Sepulchre. But they would not consent to anything more than a temporary armistice. During its continuance fresh causes of hostility accumulated ; and the truce had hardly expired when the desperate struggle recommenced. In the former war the advantage had been with the Venetians, who in five bloody battles had seen the flag of their enemies go down before them ; but the fortune of Genoa was in the ascendant now. In the year 1298, her fleet, penetrating the Adriatic under Lamba Doria, a warrior of the old Roman stamp, gained a complete victory off Curzola, almost at the gates of Venice. Almost at the same time, another Venetian armament was defeated with frightful loss in the Dardanelles ; and the proud Lady of "Three Eighths of the Roman Empire," weakened but not subdued, suffered herself to accept the mediation of Matteo Visconti, signor of Milan, and consent to a peace which was an acknowledgment of defeat. This triumph, which made the Ligurian capital for the time the first naval power of Southern Europe,

concludes the external history of the maritime republics during the twelfth century.

The battle of Meloria not only deprived Pisa of the dominion of the seas ; it also completely changed her character. Up to this moment she has appeared as a maritime power, and her relations have been with Venice and Genoa ; henceforth she is to be regarded as one of the landward powers, and principally occupied with the politics of Tuscany. Deprived by death or captivity of her best and truest citizens, while the rest were crippled by the enormous sacrifices which they had made to carry on the war, Pisa for one instant seemed to think that to preserve her independence it was necessary to surrender her freedom. Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, a great feudal lord, whose ancestors had been long intimately connected with the fortunes of the republic, and who had himself commanded part of their fleet in the fatal battle, was allowed to assume a power somewhat approaching to that wielded in Ferrara by the Estes, and in Milan by the La Torres, before they became absolutely invested with the *signoria* ; and for a time it seemed as if tyranny, wearing the same guise with which she had masked her designs in Lombardy, would overleap the charmed barrier of the Apennines, and establish herself in the stronghold of freedom. But it was only for a moment. As soon as Ugolino's real designs became manifest, the glorious city roused herself to shake off and spurn from her the yoke ; and Ugolino, taken prisoner with all his family, paid the penalty of the crimes and treasons by which he had thought to pave his way to power, by a death too cruel to be merited even by them, and which, in spite of Dante, one is glad to believe is rather to be charged to the archbishop than to the republic. The wounds which had been inflicted on Pisa by the hostile sword of Genoa had been deepened by the treacherous lancet of Ugolino. This last effort had taxed what little remaining strength she had ; and it was at this moment, when appa-

rently fainting from exhaustion, that she was attacked by Florence, at the head of the whole pack of Tuscan Guelfs. It is wonderful that she should not have succumbed at once ; but as sometimes has been seen, she appeared to derive strength from the magnitude of her danger. The martial spirit which had at one time given her the command of the sea was as nobly displayed on land ; and when she emerged from the conflict, wounded, battered, and impoverished as she was, she emerged a conqueror.

It would be an endless task were I to attempt to follow closely the history of the political revolutions of Tuscany. The cities of that district were divided both internally and against one another by the names of Guelf and Ghibelline. The alternate success of the two factions in each republic transferred them constantly from the one party to the other ; but amid these fluctuations, they preserved respectively a general traditionary policy. Florence, which by degrees rose to the chief place among them all, was the head of the Guelfs ; and during the distractions and the weakness of Pisa, the Ghibellines looked as their leader to Siena. During the earlier part of this period the battle was waged fiercely between these two. Its most prominent incident was the great victory won by the Sienese at Monteperto, which brought Florence to the ground metaphorically, and would have done so literally if it had not been for the protest of her illustrious exile, Farinata degli Uberti, as recounted by Dante, who puts him in hell for his pains, not allowing his patriotism to save him from the consequences of his heterodoxy. The defeat of Manfred restored to the Guelfs the mastery of Florence, which the Sienese were no longer able to disturb ; and from that period to the end of the century the contests of the Tuscan republics, and especially of Florence, take less the character of a strife of factions, and more that of a strife of classes. In that city the nobles of the victorious party, freed from all fear of their adversaries, set no bounds

to their arrogance : no longer forced to court the support of their countrymen of lesser degree, they treated them with intolerable insolence ; and the excesses and disorders of which they were guilty might serve as a palliation for the tyrannies of Lombardy. The people of Florence had in the year 1282 organised the government of their city on a commercial basis, the chief magistrates being taken not from the nobles, but from the seven principal guilds, or "*arti maggiori*," as they were called, into which the trading classes of the city were divided : they had animated it with a democratic spirit by providing that its members should be changed every two months ; and this insolence on the part of what was not in any respect legally a privileged class, became thus doubly offensive. These discontents found an unexpected champion in a member of one of the great Guelf families, *Giano della Bella*. By his advice the Florentines enacted the celebrated "*Ordinances of Justice*," which excluded the nobles for the future from all share of the government, and appointed a new officer, called the *Gonfalonier of Justice*, especially charged with the task of controlling and chastising them. This officer, who was invested with extraordinary power and dignity as President of the *Signoria* and first magistrate of the republic, was directed to attack and destroy the houses of any nobles who might be reported on any authority whatever to be disturbers of the peace ; and he was empowered to sentence members of that order to fine, banishment, and death, without having to prove their guilt by testimony. The outrageous character of these laws, which were dictated not by justice, but by vengeance, is a striking though not a solitary proof of that cruelty and insolence in prosperity which is such a salient characteristic of the factions of this republic ; but, unjust as they were, the turbulence of the order of nobles throughout the region which has been marked out as the refuge of freedom in the west of Italy, caused them to be imitated, at least to the

extent of depriving that order of office, by other states, and among them by Siena and by Genoa. The nobles, as may be imagined, having now so good an excuse for turbulence, strove furiously against this persecution. The disorders which it was intended to check were aggravated. The well-meant efforts of Giano della Bella only recoiled upon himself. The mark of hatred to the aristocracy whom he had deserted, and of suspicion to the people whom he had befriended, he avoided the fury of the one and the ingratitude of the other by a voluntary banishment, choosing rather to eat the bread of the stranger than to be the cause of civil war to his country. That country requited his forbearance by the fulmination against him and his descendants of a decree of perpetual exile.

The character of Italian civilisation was essentially aristocratic. In the earlier organisation of the Lombard and Tuscan republics, the governors or *podestàs*, though their election had to be approved by the people, were always taken, in fact were obliged by law to be taken, from the class of the nobles; and even after they had done their best by their disorders to destroy the respect and affection with which they had been regarded, the Lombards found a remedy for those disorders by converting individual members of that order into tyrants, and the Tuscans and Ligurians by forming new aristocracies nearly as powerful and nearly as arrogant as those which they replaced. But while in both these sections of Northern Italy the nobles insanely flung away the supremacy which their countrymen desired nothing better than to allow them to retain, the feeling which was there checked and repelled was allowed to have its full development in Venice. No aristocracy that ever existed possessed so fully as did the Venetian the qualities which are supposed to be proper to that class. The antiquity of their families surpassed that of the proudest houses of Germany and of France: some could point to an uninterrupted

pedigree from the first founders of the republic in 450: some claimed descent from the patricians, nay, from the Emperors of Constantinople in the sixth century: one or two had ruled Venice with something approaching to a hereditary succession at a time when the names of Capet, of Este, and of Hohenstaufen were unknown; while there were not wanting those who boasted with plausibility, and perhaps with truth, that they represented the great consular families of the Roman Republic and the Cæsars of the Roman Empire. The lustre of their inherited pretensions was increased by their personal character and actions; by their wisdom in legislation, by their skill and valour in battle, by their sagacious diplomacy, above all, by the spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of the state, which rivalled that of antiquity, they raised their country to a height of prosperity and to a prestige in the face of the world possessed by no other Italian state. Instead of defying the laws, they only sought to control while they obeyed them; and they were rewarded by being invested, by the confidence of their countrymen, with a supremacy based on reverence and love. It is not my intention to relate how this tacit supremacy was changed into a legal one. Suffice it that in the year 1297, exactly six hundred years after the election of the first Doge of Venice, and three hundred after the assumption of the dominion of the Adriatic, by conferring on his successor the additional title of Duke of Dalmatia, the Doge Pietro Gradenigo, by the closing, as it was called, of the Grand Council, confined the right of sitting in that assembly to the families which had sat there before, and debarred for ever citizens of inferior birth from rising to the honours of the government. It is one of the circumstances which reflects most credit on the Venetian aristocracy, that it should have flourished, and deserved to flourish, in spite of this law; and that a limited number of families, without any infusion of new blood, should have been found sufficient to

furnish the state, century after century, with men worthy to direct its counsels and guide its fleets. Still, it was a mistake in policy. The governing class of Venice did not often commit mistakes of this description ; but when it did, they were great ones.

Thus, between the two extremes of system which prevailed in other parts of Northern Italy, there arose a third. Free alike from the lawless caprices of the tyrants and the lawless violences of the republics, the Venetian state was at that time alone in Europe in presenting the spectacle of unity and of order, of a beneficent government and an obedient and contented people. But these incalculable advantages were counterbalanced by great faults. The possibility of a democratic convulsion was guarded against by a discouragement of plebeian intellect. The possibility of a noble obtaining despotic power was guarded against by a jealous *surveillance* and *espionage* (I am obliged to use French words, for which I am glad to say there is no English equivalent). A body elected every year, called the Council of Ten, was instituted to carry on this system, and invested with powers superior to all law. The operations of this body, whose name even at this day exerts a kind of fascination of horror, were like those of the mole: no services, no innocence served to protect those whom it once suspected ; the punishments it inflicted were mysterious and terrible. Its actions could be seen in their fruits ; but the means by which they were accomplished were shrouded in obscurity. It has been only since the destruction of the Republic at the close of the last century, that the machinery of its working has been laid bare by the publication of the statutes or rules which it drew up for its own guidance ; and those statutes display an amount of cold-blooded unscrupulousness, of utter indifference to the heinousness of the means to be employed in obtaining political advantages, however trifling, which

is almost enough to take away the reader's breath. As in the greatness of its wickedness, so also in the mystery in which it wrapped itself, it was unapproachable by any system ever devised by man : unseen, impalpable, it lay behind, and impended over every other authority in the State, even the dreaded Ten themselves ; and that fearful band who could crush in their grasp noble, senator, and doge, were themselves at the mercy of those of their body who held the office of Inquisitor of State. No one in Venice dared to speak above his breath on matters of state : the very walls seemed to be peopled by the ministers of the Government ; and wherever a man moved, he felt himself followed by a jealous and all-seeing eye. Sagacious, sleepless, merciless, unforgiving, knowing how to defer to strike, but never striking in vain, enlightened in its views of government, beloved by its subjects, respected by foreign powers, the Venetian polity was the first, and in many respects the most perfect specimen that Europe has seen of a bureaucracy, holding by tradition, but without degenerating into red-tapism.*

* Daru says, that no name has been invented among men which shall adequately describe the Government of Venice ; and I do not mean to say that "bureaucracy" does. In one point of view Venice was governed by an aristocracy of birth ; in another, it got to be very much under the influence of an oligarchy of wealth ; but still bureaucracy appears to be the most fitting term on the whole. The Council of the *Pregadi*, otherwise called the Senate, and which from its history and its composition bore a closer resemblance to the Roman Senate than probably any other body that ever existed—a council which by degrees drew to itself almost all the functions of Government, except where it was interfered with by the irregular action of the Council of Ten—was very bureaucratic in character. It originally consisted of sixty members, called to assist the Doge by their counsel in matters of importance. It was afterwards increased by a *Giunta* of sixty more, whom the Romans would have called the *Conscripti* ; and finally admitted not only persons who might assist at but not influence their deliberations, but also all, or almost all, the principal officials and magistrates of the republic, whether at home or abroad, both during and after their term of office. The chief of these were of course the Doge and his six counsellors, and their more powerful and important coadjutors, the *Savii*, or Sages, to whom the admin-

Each, then, of the three sections into which Northern Italy has been divided, has assumed a distinct character of its own, and each of the three great principles of government has its representative. Lombardy and Æmilia are monarchical, Tuscany and Liguria democratical, and Venice aristocratical. The different states have enrolled themselves under their respective banners, and are formed into groups. The development of the three great systems, and their action upon the international relations of those states with one another, will be seen in the second and third subdivisions of the second period, which occupy the whole of the fourteenth century.

istration was confided, though under the watchful control of the Senate. It naturally followed that, in a council of this nature, charged, it may be said, with almost the whole business of legislation, and comprising within itself every important member of every department of the administration, including the Council of Ten themselves, experience, ability, and habits of political business told with very considerable weight; and consequently the same senators were elected over and over again. It rather looked as if the Senate was likely to treat the Grand Council in the same way as the Grand Council had treated the people; but the latter body were too wary to let matters get this length. A law was passed that no senator might be re-elected more than three times in succession, while the *Savi*, whose term of office lasted six months, were incapacitated from being re-appointed without waiting for at least one half-year after giving up their functions. These limitations, however, came afterwards: the first of them was not imposed till the eighteenth century; and after all they only modified the system, without changing it. I think, therefore, that, without going more fully into details, I may leave this expression as it stands, though it was not written without hesitation.

CHAPTER V.

*The Period of Summer—The Battle of Liberty against Tyranny
—Entr'acte the First—The Papacy.*



THE second subdivision of the second period may be held, speaking in general terms, as lasting from 1300 to 1350. Its principal feature is the conflict between liberty and tyranny, arising from the constant though unconnected attempts made by the latter, secure in the territory which it had already mastered, to extend itself over the boundary of that which still remained to the former. Tyranny, like the eagle in Horace's simile, leaving its eyrie in the Euganean hills and the central Alps, has struck down and devoured the timid and unresisting denizens of the plains at its feet ; and, desirous of worthier conflicts and nobler blood, prepares for a wider sweep among a more hardy brood.

Before, however, touching upon the varying fortunes of that struggle, which gradually was to involve the whole of Northern Italy, I shall pause at the commencement of the century to glance at the position of the Popes.

On the death of Nicholas the Fourth, the chief event of whose pontificate was the aggrandisement of the house of Colonna, the cardinals, seized with a sudden fit of devotion, or disgusted at the nepotism which had of late been so prominent among the occupants of St Peter's chair, made

choice as his successor of the hermit Pietro da Murrone, renowned for the sanctity and austerity of his life, and forced him, sorely against his will, to accept the offered dignity. But Celestine the Fifth—which was the name assumed by the new pontiff—if he differed from his predecessors in piety, differed from them also in ability; and the conclave of *that* day were not long in discovering that an excellent private character is not the sole qualification necessary for the head of the Church. A strong and increasing party among the cardinals urged him to resign a post for which he was manifestly unfit, with as much earnestness as they had formerly shown in pressing him to undertake it. All the engines of spiritual machinery were brought to bear upon the unhappy Pope; and there were not wanting hints that, should these fail, those of temporal coercion might be employed also. Celestine's position was a truly pitiable one: it resembled to some extent that of those Roman officers who were in several instances compelled, by the menaces of the troops under their command, to assume the purple, and thus against their inclination stand committed to a contest in which success was nearly as dangerous as failure: on the one hand was the ardent desire to return to a mode of life which he had only abandoned in deference to the most violent solicitations, and which his experience of power had rendered doubly attractive to him; on the other, fear of the sin of deserting his post. For some weeks his mind oscillated between the two courses; and during that time I suppose he suffered as much misery as ever fell to the lot of any man: his health gave way under the combined effects of anxiety and self-inflicted penance; his eyesight was seriously impaired by his constant weeping; his intellect, never very clear, became utterly confused under the influence of mental suffering and physical weakness; those around him redoubled their instances and their threats with constantly increasing distinctness; and at length the re-

nunciation which was extorted from his feebleness permitted the tiara to descend upon the head of the leader of the band of the intriguers by whom it was obtained, Cardinal Gaetani, who took the title of Boniface the Eighth.

The history of the Popes of the thirteenth century bears some resemblance to the *Æschylean* drama. The main idea which pervades all that remain to us of that poet's tragedies is that of an impersonal Fate, or perhaps I should rather say an abstract Divine Justice, driving sinners to provoke the anger of the gods by arrogance, and raising up others to become the instruments of punishment by fresh crimes, which mark them out in their turn as the objects of vengeance. Sometimes the dramatist represents this vengeance as concentrating itself upon a single family. The crime of some distant ancestor is visited upon his descendants: the curse can never be wiped away: its working out is effected by the hands of the doomed race themselves: in obedience to the same mysterious and terrific law, they are now encouraged by prosperity to exalt themselves to a level with the gods, now seized with an insane desire to shed each other's blood: husbands are slain by their wives, mothers by their sons, brothers by their brothers; and generation after generation the roll of crime goes on swelling and swelling, till it is extinguished in the blood of the last descendant of the line, or allowed to be expiated by some special interposition of Divine mercy. It would seem (I look at the history with the eye of a Greek) as though some great and evil deed committed by the Popes at the beginning of the century had brought the curse upon their dynasty. The insolence and cruelty of the succession is aggravated with each succeeding pontiff. At length retribution begins slowly and gradually to unfold itself. By a strange and ominous coincidence, the instruments of their crimes become the instruments also of their punishment: their ingratitude to Milan and their aggression upon the La Torres is requited by their

tools the Visconti : their far greater guilt in the murder of Conradin and the desolation of the southern kingdom is followed by their enslavement for the time by their instruments the house of Anjou : but the great and original crime of all has not yet borne its fruit. The others have been followed by their just punishment almost immediately. This one has met, for a whole century, with perfect impunity, save only with that insanity which, it is said, the powers above inflict upon those whom they wish to destroy—that insanity which urged Capaneus to blaspheme the gods, and Agamemnon to strew his triumphal path with purple and scarlet. A century has elapsed since the perpetration of that tremendous crime—that crime before which all others committed by the Popes in their political capacity were as nothing. The crime was the Albigensian Crusade : the instrument was the royal house of France.

In Boniface the Eighth the character of the “Dugentista” popedom, which, as we have seen, had been in abeyance ever since the death of Clement the Fourth, revived in full vigour, both in its good and in its bad qualities. His courage and resolution were little, if at all, inferior to those of Hildebrand : his devotion to what he considered his duty in upholding the rights of his see was intense ; and, as far as I know, he was superior to the practice of nepotism, which was becoming rather fashionable : at least it is certain that it would have been easy for him to have raised his family, which already ranked high among the Roman nobility, to a level with the Orsini and the Colonna if he had used his official power for the purpose ; and that he did not do. On the other hand, his arrogance and haughtiness surpassed, almost to the extent of caricaturing, anything that had been known before, even on the Papal throne. He fully equalled the worst of his predecessors in merciless vindictiveness ; and he displayed on several occasions a perfidy so barefaced, that I cannot call to mind anything in their history to match it,

and which seems rather to belong to a later century. He was not long in exhibiting his character. The deposition (for such it really was) of Pope Celestine had been procured by somewhat questionable means: there was not wanting a considerable party who doubted its validity; and it was obvious that if Celestine fell into the hands of that party, he might prove a serious embarrassment to his successor. Boniface felt that he had injured him far too seriously to merit any forbearance at his hands; and, judging from what his own feelings would be in similar circumstances, fully expected to receive none. One method there was of removing all difficulties or apprehensions on that score, and that method was at that time in his hands. I should hesitate, without having a clearer recollection of the facts of the case than I have, to charge him with a crime which circumstances rendered easy to him, and which his interests seemed almost to require: but it is certain that the general voice of Europe gave to the death of the ex-pope, which took place at that moment, the name of assassination, and accused as the murderer the man who had most to gain by the deed; nor, as far as I know, has posterity reversed the verdict.

All Boniface's character was brought out by a conflict in which, shortly after his accession, he engaged with the house of Colonna. That great family, long conspicuous for wealth and valour among the lords of the Campagna, had recently shot up to a height of power which might excusably alarm a less ambitious Pope than Boniface; and all the more so that their politics were Ghibelline, and therefore on principle hostile to the Papal See. It was not long before a cause of quarrel arose; and Boniface at once excommunicated the whole race, and preached a crusade against them. These gentle methods for reclaiming wandering sheep were so much in vogue with the Popes, and were fortified with so many excellent precedents, that one can hardly

find any fault with this ; but he rather went beyond his authorities in persuading the chiefs of the enemy to surrender on liberal conditions, and then imprisoning them and seizing their property. This was the celebrated "*lunga promessa, coll' attender corto*" of Guido da Montefeltro, to whom the Pope applied for advice as to how he should act on the occasion, thinking that in his spiritual capacity as Pope he had a right to ask from a friar what that friar, in his old secular capacity as *condottiere*, would be best able to give—good sound worldly counsel. Guido seems to have had some little hesitation as to whether such a sentiment was consistent with his present vocation, which he had taken up in order to wipe off the stains which his conscience had contracted during a rough, noisy career as a soldier and politician, and not being quite certain how it would be taken, stipulated for absolution beforehand, and got it. It does not seem, however, to have been held valid by Dante, for he relates that he met the Papal counsellor in the lowest circle of the Inferno.

There was one quality in which Boniface, much as he resembled the earlier "Dugentisti" in most respects, did not equal them. To use a phrase which the present Emperor of the French has made fashionable, he did not "understand his epoch." Inflated to an even higher degree than they had been with the greatness of his position, and claiming even more complete supremacy in matters temporal as well as spiritual than they had done, he did not take into account that the state of things which had enabled their pretensions to be successfully put forward had passed away. When Hildebrand flung down the gauntlet to Henry the Fourth, he was supported both by the superstition and by the intellect of the age. The blind veneration which was so generally felt for the Pope as the holder of the keys of Paradise, and which was justified by the high characters of those who for several years had held his office,

would procure for him the support of nearly every man in Europe who was not attached by interest to the Imperial side : in an age when the clergy were almost the sole depositories of learning, his cause would appear to be that of mind against matter, of reason against violence ; and he had besides the moral advantage of the sympathy which men are so apt to extend to what appears to be the weaker side, and more especially when that side is making a gallant and unflinching stand for principle. Under later Popes the latter advantage was lost. It was fully established at Canossa that the unwarlike and defenceless priest who sat on St Peter's chair was fully a match for the fiercest and proudest of the Cæsars of the Holy Roman Empire, and that material force could not permanently prevail against the combined strength of superstition and intelligence ; and in subsequent contests with the civil power the Popes could no longer claim to be respected on the ground of their weakness. By degrees, too, the second advantage began to slip from their grasp ; the awakening intellect of Europe began to show signs of overleaping the barriers by which they had sought to confine it ; and every year it increased in strength, and rendered it more probable that, useful as it had been as an ally, it would be far more than proportionally formidable as an enemy. On the other hand, the principal source of their power remained ; no longer a vague feeling of reverence on the part of the multitude, but grown into a vast edifice of ecclesiastical power of imposing aspect, though still incomplete, with a vast code of laws and traditions to cement it, and with a regularly graduated hierarchy, which, from the highest to the lowest, moved as one man in obedience to the will of a single chief. In the mental development of Europe, if one section of the human intellect had diverged from the path which the Church had traced out, the other had been enlisted in her cause, had submitted to be drilled and disciplined, had

forged weapons for her service, and had supplied her with champions well fitted to use them. But it was not on such aids merely that she relied. Towards the close of the twelfth century, it became evident that she must either conquer or be conquered by the rising spirit of independent thought ; and it was about this time that she became involved in a renewed contest with the Empire. Fortunately for her, her two antagonists did not unite their forces ; and she was able to deal with them singly, as we have seen. She freed herself for the time from one by availing herself with great tact of a new principle which was beginning to assert itself prominently in the world, that of political liberty ; and then she turned upon the other. Neither liberty nor superstition, nor the learning which she had attached to her cause, were of any avail against this new foe ; and she did not hesitate to use the only weapon which remained—force. Languedoc was at the head of the intellectual movement. She was at once the most cultivated and least religious country in Europe ; and she had advanced so far and so fast in her career of progress that she stood almost alone. Upon Languedoc therefore the whole force of the Papal fury was concentrated. The spiritual censures were treated with contempt by the lively race against which they were levelled, who, strong in their intellectual supremacy, and devoted to the gay and cheerful science of the Troubadours, despised the vices of one section of the clergy and were revolted by the grim fanaticism of the other ; but they had a most powerful effect beyond their borders. The Kings of Northern France cast a hungry glance at the rich provinces which lay between them and the Mediterranean, the appanage of the Counts of Toulouse and Provence ; and all the ruffianry, noble or ignoble, of the regions north of the Loire, saw in those provinces a splendid field for plunder. It was surmised, too, that the arts of war had not been cultivated in that country to the same

extent as those of peace : the bee-hive, therefore, might be robbed without much danger of being severely stung ; and it may be conceived how charming it was to be told not only that they might rob it lawfully, but actually render a service to religion by doing so. France, therefore (it is difficult not to use the language of Parisian pamphlets of the present day), faithful as ever to her principles, remembered that she was the eldest daughter of the Church, and frankly accepted the mission which Providence had imposed upon her, and for the first, though by no means for the last time, was willing to do the dirty work of the Holy See in return for a handsome consideration. The bribe was a very handsome one ; and it must be admitted that "France" did well what she was paid to do, and fully earned it—perhaps even went beyond what was required in the excess of her enthusiasm. I think even Innocent the Third, provided they had kept fires enough going to burn heretics or suspected heretics, would not have rigorously insisted on quite so many destructions of flourishing cities and massacres of unoffending populations as they favoured him with. Such was the fate of the County of Toulouse ; its Counts fared no better. At the very commencement of the troubles Raymond the Sixth made a humiliating submission to the Papal Legates in order to save his country from the fearful doom which seemed impending—allowing himself to be scourged publicly by monks round the Church of St Gilles ; and the concluding scene of the whole was the repetition of the same disgraceful torture upon the body of his son, Raymond the Seventh, who, after exerting himself like a hero to deliver and avenge his unhappy subjects, at last found that by doing so he only prolonged their misery without hope of final success, and endeavoured by this personal humiliation, and by the sacrifice of several provinces, to conciliate where he could not conquer. Provence escaped the great avalanche which rolled over and crushed her

sister county: but the influence of the ruin made itself felt beyond its actual area: the atmosphere became chill and dead; and what little warmth remained was extinguished by the marriage of the heiress of the Berengers with Charles of Anjou, who, becoming sovereign of the country, did, with less noise and less personal danger, but not less effectually, what De Montfort and his Crusaders had done in Languedoc; and it was perhaps his performances in that capacity that marked him out as a fitting person to carry out the same kind of work in Sicily. Meanwhile the Church had introduced fresh improvements into her organisation and discipline; two distinguished religious orders, those of St Francis and St Dominic, the one of Italian and the other of Spanish origin, arose, and gave to her system heart and support: the learning of the one gave her an intellectual stronghold which she had not before: the other rendered her a still greater service by the grasp which it gave her over the devotion of the humbler classes of society; and the rivalry, even hostility, which they felt and exhibited towards each other, was taken advantage of to rouse them to emulation in zeal for her service. The enormous increase of strength which the Church had gained was made manifest in the struggle which I have mentioned with Frederick the Second. In that struggle the two great antagonists which she had been opposed to separately were combined against her: the great prestige of the Cæsarean majesty, and the young strength of civilisation which, beaten down in Languedoc, was rising again in Sicily. As we have seen, she not only did not shrink from the encounter, but she actually forced it on; and her triumph was most signal. It was entirely her own. In the first contest with the Hohenstaufens, the Pope had been saved by his alliance with the League of Lombardy; in the second, the League of Lombardy was saved by its alliance with the Pope. In the war against Languedoc-

doc, the aid of overwhelming physical force had been bought in order to crush intelligence ; in that against Frederick the Second, the moral power of the Pope's anathemas was sufficient to crush a sovereign possessed of overwhelming physical force. But great as was the victory, there were not wanting elements of weakness : the mighty giant with the head of gold, and the breast of silver, and the loins and legs of brass and iron, had feet of clay : the great system, with its magnificent hierarchy and its richly endowed priesthood, its unabashed casuists and rhetoricians, and its fearless and indomitable army of monks and friars, had for its basis public opinion ;* and public opinion was beginning to suffer a reaction. Without adopting the Greek notion which I have alluded to, of a supernatural Nemesis, it would have been easy to predict that such would be the case ; for the history of the world is the history of the flowing and ebbing of popular feeling ; and though the tide may, in some instances, run long and high and violently in one direction, it is certain to retire sooner or later, and to leave the vessels that have trusted to it, and suffered themselves to be borne along by it, stranded upon the shore. The bark of St Peter was no exception to this rule. Had the Popes been the mildest and most virtuous of men—had Gregory the Tenth, and men like him, worn the tiara from the time of Innocent the Fourth to the end of the century, some sort of reaction must have occurred ; and they were anything but the mildest of men. The arrogance of their triumph—their ingratitude to their supporters—the ungenerous vindictiveness with which they hunted down the fallen race of their enemy, even to the third generation—the cruelty with which they handed over a kingdom which they claimed as

* Of course I am only speaking of the Church of Rome in its political, or rather ecclesiastico-political relations. With its doctrinal and theological aspect what I say here has nothing to do.

a fief of their own to be the prey of a horde of barbarous foreigners, created a feeling of general disgust, not the less deeply felt for not being very loudly expressed ; and the hatred which had been attracted towards themselves and their see by some Popes, was reinforced by the contempt which was attracted by others. Clement the Fourth and his predecessors had maintained their power by terror ; but when nepotism, sycophancy, imbecility became enthroned at the Vatican in the persons of successive Popes for a series of years, even that feeling would no longer be inspired ; and when Boniface mounted the Papal chair, the day of which the feet of the image were formed was becoming painfully manifest.

Those to whom it is most important to beware of a reaction, are generally the last to perceive that it has commenced ; and this was the case with Boniface. The possibility of such an event never occurred to him ; and even if it had, it is doubtful whether his haughty and resolute spirit would not have treated it with contempt. Strong in his not altogether ignoble pride, and fully persuading himself that he had been commissioned by Heaven to exercise a direct supremacy over the powers of this world, he treated the kings of Christendom as his vassals. His pretensions excited general alarm and resistance, and ere long plunged him into a conflict from which Hildebrand or Innocent the Third would have shrunk—one on the question of the Gallican liberties with the King of France. This new enemy to the Papal See, though less formidable in appearance, was far more dangerous in reality than its old foes the German Emperors. His character was different : his position was different : his objects were different. They were the rulers of a motley empire : he was the chief of a compact nation. Their sway was over princes and republics : his over liege subjects. They sought to assert their supremacy over the Church : he sought to maintain the independence of his crown. They

founded their political power upon the aid of soldiers, and their intellectual power upon that of poets and philosophers: he founded his, political as well as intellectual, upon that of lawyers. They fought their battle with the sword of Cæsar: he fought his with the Pandects of Justinian. Finally, they looked for their adherents among Saracens: he found his among Crusaders. Nor were their personal characters less opposed than their objects and their position. Henry the Fourth, Frederick Barbarossa, Frederick the Second, Manfred, were all men of noble and generous natures, though not to the same degree. They are sometimes stained with injustice, sometimes with cruelty, sometimes even with perfidy: but one cannot help feeling that these vices, especially the latter, do not belong to them,—they are the outbreaks of the fierce old uncontrollable spirit of the Teutonic forests, which considered all means justifiable against the superior guile of a wily and deep-plotting antagonist; and this error should not be too hardly judged, as it has been fallen into by men as high-minded as they were, in much later and more enlightened ages. Philip the Fair was of a different mould. He was crafty and cold-blooded, fully aware of the temper of the times and the strength and weakness of his own position, too wary ever to attempt anything he was not pretty sure to succeed in, and not likely to be led astray from his path by any outburst of passion or generosity. Had Boniface reflected, it might have occurred to him that only one of the Kaisers to whom the Popes had been opposed at all approached this character, and against that one—Henry the Fifth—they had failed.

I do not recollect the circumstances of the history of the quarrel with sufficient distinctness to put them on paper, nor, fortunately, is it essential that I should do so. The concluding scene is well known. Boniface was at Anagni. He had there prepared a bull, surpassing in its haughty

language anything that had appeared before, even from him, stating his commission to rule the powers of this world with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel; when, in the midst of his fool's paradise of unquestioned dominion and irresistible power, his house was attacked by a band of French cavalry, headed by Guillaume de Nogaret, one of the ablest and most unscrupulous of the band of lawyers by whom Philip was surrounded, and Sciarra, the exiled and persecuted chief of the Colonna. There were no means of offering any resistance; and the invaders burst into his chamber, and, unawed by the dignity of his station or his demeanour, seized him, loaded him with insults and even blows, and made him a prisoner. The Anagnians rose and rescued him; but the purpose of his enemies was gained. The iron of his humiliation and disgrace entered into his soul. For two or three days, we are told, he remained almost motionless, refusing to take nourishment, gnawing the top of his staff, and glaring on all who approached him; and, on the third day, he dashed his head against the wall of his chamber, and was found by his attendants dead, with his grey hair stained with blood, and his skull fractured by the blow.

The shock of this terrible catastrophe sobered the College of Cardinals at once; and, in their next choice, they reverted to the precedent of 1272, and conferred the tiara upon a man distinguished no less for piety and gentleness of character than for ability. The new Pope took the name of Benedict the Eleventh. The difference between him and his predecessor was soon visible, and it seemed as if the now depressed power of the Church might be strengthened and restored. But it was too late. Philip was not a man to hesitate about the means he employed to rid himself of his enemies: and, finding Benedict likely to be troublesome, he got out of the difficulty by the simple expedient of having him poisoned. The murdered Pope

lies buried in the Church of St Dominick at Perugia. The grief and alarm which was felt at his loss found its expression in a superb mausoleum ; and I hold it to be an honourable circumstance to Italian art, and a curious example of retributive justice, that while the two finest sepulchral monuments, erected during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Western Italy, contain the bones of Gregory the Tenth and Benedict the Eleventh, the best Popes of the whole of that period, the bodies of Innocent the Third, Urban the Fourth, and Martin the Fourth, the tyrant, the persecutor, and the slave, are shut up in one box and shoved out of the way against the walls of a chapel, in the cathedral of the same town in which Benedict's tomb is shown to strangers as one of the masterpieces of the great sculptor, Giovanni Pisano.

As in the election of the late Pope the cardinals had reverted to the precedent of Gregory the Tenth, Philip took care that in the next one they should return to that of Martin the Fourth. By a judicious employment of intimidation, he caused the tiara to be conferred on a Frenchman, who became Clement the Fifth, and who was everything that Philip could desire. France, so he probably reasoned, had shown her filial piety a century ago by doing dirty jobs for the Church, and it was right that the Church should now show her maternal love by doing a dirty job for France. An uncommonly dirty job it was ; and there being several other little matters of the same kind which required attending to, it was considered on the whole more convenient that the Holy See should repose for the present under the protecting arm of her obedient child. Even after the grand business of the extermination of the Templars was accomplished, the arrangement was found so desirable that it was kept up. The Papal residence was fixed at Avignon : the College of Cardinals became more and more composed of Frenchmen, electing in succession a series of popes of the

same nation as themselves, who had no other wish than to remain where they were; and for seventy years of what Petrarch afterwards called the Babylonish captivity, the Papal See dwelt in exile in the heart of the land which she had caused to be laid waste, and amid the descendants of those whom she had caused to be slaughtered, in willing and shameful vassalage to the power which had been the instrument of her crime. She had founded religious orders to aid her in carrying out an infamous persecution; and she was forced to give up a religious order which, whatever its crimes, had at least done her great services, to be the victim of a still more infamous persecution. She had given as a war-cry to the French the defence of Catholic doctrine; and a Pope was forced to make a humiliating confession of heresy at the will of a King of France. She had hated the Court of Toulouse for its intellectual cultivation; and it was her fate to strive, and to strive unsuccessfully, to rival that court in precisely the same kind of cultivation in which it had excelled. She had sought to excite odium against the Languedocians, by heaping upon them charges of profligacy; and her own court became the byword of Christendom as the most profligate that had been known in Latin Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. Thus fully and completely was the vengeance of Languedoc wrought out.

The Church of Rome will appear no more before us as a spiritual power. She went on falling with each half-century lower and lower in the estimation of mankind: the disgrace of the slavery of Avignon was outdone by that of the Western schism: the scandal which was thereby created caused a revolt among the clergy themselves; and for one moment it appeared that the Papal despotism, or rather bureaucracy, was about to be exchanged for something like constitutional government. But it was not so to be. The Papacy, like the Italian sovereigns of the present day, fought against and conquered the spirit which might have

been its safeguard ; and it was suffered to go on heaping crime upon crime, each Pope worse than the one who went before him, a good man like Nicholas the Fifth and Pius the Second now and then standing out in prominent relief against the mass of blackness, till the outraged sense of mankind could bear it no longer, and it woke from its heaven of luxury and pride amidst the wild crash of the Reformation, with the noblest half of Europe casting off its yoke, and the fidelity of the remainder based on interest or apathy, and wavering in the balance. As often before in her history, she was inspired with energy and strength by the magnitude of her dangers ; but the story of this is beyond the limits to which I wish to confine myself. The efforts of the Popes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to establish a temporal dominion in Central Italy will claim attention as belonging to the political history of the Peninsula ; but the Church, as a Church, ceases to have any influence upon its course ; and from the time of Clement the Fifth she goes her way into the dull solitudes of Avignon, and we see her no more.

It will serve to bring us back to that Italian history, from which I have been too long absent, if I mention in this place a circumstance which at first sight, and at first sight only, appears at variance with the weakness which I have attributed to the Papacy at this period. The dominion of Ferrara, long hereditary in the house of Este, was about this time disputed between two rival claimants for the succession ; and one of them, whether despairing of success, or preferring to be wealthy in a private station to a troublesome contest for what after all might be a precarious sovereignty, sold his rights to the republic of Venice ; and the Venetians lost no time in taking possession of their purchase. It appears that even at this date the Popes had formed the plan of consoling themselves for their diminished spiritual authority by converting their

suzerainty over the territories included in the supposed donation of Constantine into a sovereignty. As Ferrara lay within those limits, Clement conceived he had a right to interfere with this transaction ; and certainly interference was desirable, if the project above mentioned was to be carried out, for no more formidable enemy could have appeared. Among all the communities of Europe, the Venetians had stood alone in resisting, and successfully resisting, the pretensions of the Papal See to interfere in temporal matters. They had braved, and induced their allies the French barons to brave, the angry denunciations of the terrible Innocent the Third at their diversion of the fourth Crusade, from its original destination, to Zara and Constantinople : they denied to the clergy within their dominions the immunities from secular jurisdiction which they enjoyed elsewhere ; and in allowing the Inquisition to be established, they did so upon conditions which left it nearly powerless. The establishment at Ferrara of such a power as this was a danger which must be averted at any cost, and Clement fulminated a bull against the intruders. The Church of Rome has always a stock in trade of hard names to designate her enemies when the occasion arises : when she is weak, they are generally taken from the history of the New Testament or the early Church — such as Herod, Pontius Pilate, Diocletian : when she is strong, they are generally taken from that of the Old. Boniface had not been dead long enough for the Popes to have unlearned their references to the Mosaic dispensation, and, accordingly, the Venetians were compared to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the Devil himself ; and they were threatened with every sort of penalty, temporal as well as spiritual, unless Ferrara was abandoned within a month. The Venetians, who were ruled by the able and energetic Doge who had shortly before fixed the constitution on an aristocratic basis, paid very little attention to all this abuse, and the bull was in due course

followed by a crusade. The Estes held a high character as compared with most of their compeers, the tyrants of Lombardy ; and their subjects, attached to their rule, saw with small pleasure its exchange for the dominion of a city which they had hitherto considered in the light of an equal, and seized the opportunity to revolt. The loss of their new acquisition was not the worst evil that befell the Venetians ; for the sovereigns of Europe took advantage of the excuse to confiscate the property of all the natives of the excommunicated state which they could lay their hands on ; and as the operations of Venetian commerce extended to all parts of the Continent, the loss that was entailed was prodigious. So great was the suffering which arose in consequence, that the proud republic was forced to do what it never did before or after,* and make a humiliating submission to the Pope. It is said that a Venetian envoy grovelled in the dust at Clement's feet, regardless alike of his own dignity and of the insults which were offered him, and would not rise till he had extorted pardon ; and it may be some satisfaction to a Papalino to remember that this envoy, Francesco Dandolo, bore the same name as the Doge who had treated the Papal censures, at the time of the Fourth Crusade, with such cool contempt, and the Doge who had admitted the Inquisition on conditions which almost amounted to an insult to the Papacy. The weakness of the Holy See at this moment might be supposed to be disproved by this triumph over a power which had defied her when she was strongest ; but as Philip the Fair was a prince whose pecuniary necessities were very press-

* I do not forget the submission which, early in the sixteenth century, the Venetians made to Julius the Second ; but I look upon that in a somewhat different light from that of the present occasion. Julius the Second was not only the head, but the most active and energetic member of a confederacy against Venice, which included almost all the princes of Europe ; and the formal humiliation which her ambassador was directed to go through at the Vatican was not so much the price of his absolution as of his alliance.

ing, and whose exchequer was in consequence much benefited by the plunder of the Venetian merchants, I strongly suspect, what I have not enough knowledge to enable me to prove, that it was not without the faithful Eldest Son's permission, previously asked and obtained, that venerable Mother Church ventured upon such a stretch of authority towards her contumacious daughter.

This episode is remarkable as comprising the first important instance of an attempt on the part of the Venetians to form an empire on the mainland, and on that of the Popes to assert practically the suzerainty which had been conceded to them by Rodolf of Hapsburg. It is also an early illustration of the remarkable vitality of the house of Este, whose success in maintaining its ground against the constantly increasing power of these two formidable neighbours led its panegyrists in after times to account for it by the coincidence of its name with the word which expresses the eternal existence of God.

CHAPTER VI.

*The Period of Summer—The Battle of Liberty against Tyranny
—Second Half-Century—Tyranny begins to Encroach.*



N resuming the political history of Italy, which, as I have said, is to consist during this half-century of a series of attempts, desultory indeed, but formidable, on the part of tyranny to extend its dominion over the free states, I wish to put forward, more prominently than I have hitherto done, the great defender and representative of the opposite principle—the Republic of Florence. We have not as yet seen her in a very amiable light. Her internal history has been stained by faction and injustice ; and in her foreign relations, as far as they have come before us, she has appeared selfish and ungenerous. Nor do these vices disappear from her annals now. The date at which we have arrived, 1300, is supposed to be that in which Dante represents himself as having seen his vision. The poem in which he relates it teems with allusions, in every tone of denunciation, sorrow, and sarcasm, to the wickedness of his countrymen ; and though some allowance must be made for the bitter feelings of an exile, and something also for the naturally melancholy and perhaps misanthropic cast of the poet's mind, enough will remain on the showing of history to form a very heavy count of indictment against the republic. Her

crimes and failings, however, principally affect herself ; in her external policy she seems gradually to become more and more sensible, and more and more worthy, of the high and noble duty which devolves upon her. The ungenerous spirit which I have attributed to her sometimes betrays itself still in her dealings with her weaker neighbours, and I shall not hesitate to condemn it whenever it comes before us ; but in the great battle of the fourteenth century, her conduct is above all praise. Through all her changes of government, her rulers are actuated by the same feeling : they seem to feel that the great cause which it is their commission to uphold should not be degraded by the crimes in which their antagonists do not scruple to indulge ; and they have earned for themselves in consequence, at the bar of history, a high moral elevation, and for their contest the character not only of a defence of constitutional against absolute government, not only of a patriotic resistance to foreign invasion, but as partaking of that of the old and never-ceasing struggle of justice against injustice, of right against wrong.

It may seem rather absurd, after speaking in these very exalted terms of the Florentine republic, to draw up the curtain of the fourteenth century, when the first object that meets the eye is something approaching to a regular Irish shindy in its capital. We see two furious factions, called, for want of better names, the Whites and the Blacks (*Bianchi* and *Neri*), engaged in tearing each other to pieces for no conceivable object except the pure love of fighting. There was no shadow of a principle to fight about : it was not a struggle between Guelfs and Ghibellines, for the Ghibellines had been completely put down ; it was not a struggle between nobles and plebeians, for there were plenty of both on each side ; it was because two branches of a great Pistoiese family chose to have a feud in consequence of a quarrel at a tavern between some of their younger

members, and because the chiefs of these two branches, on visiting Florence, in consequence of a good-natured desire on the part of that republic to mediate, made themselves respectively the guests of two great nobles, Corso Donati and Veri de' Cerchi, who were desperately jealous of one another. This absurd feud seems to have been something like the fiddle in the German fairy tale, which nobody who heard it could help dancing to: it became such a nuisance that the neighbours interfered to try and put a stop to it: but the only result was that they were drawn into it themselves. Boniface the Eighth came as a preacher of peace: but no sooner was he within reach of it than his natural love for a row was too much for him, and he threw down his crosier, tucked up his sleeves, and was in the midst of it in an instant, fighting for the Neri: Charles of Valois, a French prince, who had designs on the kingdom of Naples, was persuaded to come and restore peace to Florence while waiting for a favourable opportunity to carry out his projects, and he ended by following on the same side: while the Ghibellines, who were tabooed by both parties, and could not be supposed to care much for either, brought their shillelaghs unasked to support the Bianchi; and even sober, old, gloomy Dante, who, in the year 1300, was one of the Priori who attempted to put a stop to the disturbance, became so vehement a Bianco, that the Neri, when they got the upper hand, sentenced him to perpetual exile, and even passed a decree that he should be burnt alive if they could catch him. The triumph of the latter party over their antagonists made no difference to the public peace; when the Bianchi were all killed or exiled, the Neri set to work to fight each other. Their chief, Corso Donati, who came of a race which bore a hereditary character for turbulence, quarrelled with his party for not making enough of him, and tried to make himself master of the state in order to make sure of receiving the consideration which was his

due; for this purpose he intrigued with the Ghibellines, intrigued with the Pisans, intrigued with everybody, and kept the state in perpetual hot water, till his enemies, losing patience, made a general attack upon him, took him prisoner, and slew him as he was attempting to escape. Upon his death the exhausted factions stopped to breathe, and count their losses and gains. I think they must have found the former item considerably the largest of the two, and perhaps felt rather ashamed of themselves; at any rate, we hear no more of the Bianchi and the Neri.

The Florentines made peace among themselves in good time; for hardly was this feud closed when the cause of freedom in Italy was threatened by the *first* of the perils which assailed it during this century—namely, the revival of the Imperial power. The civil conflicts which were distracting the whole country were carried on with such violence, that the triumph of one party in any city necessitated, as a matter of course, the banishment of its antagonists, and, consequently, there was hardly a state which could avoid civil war except by the loss of nearly half its principal citizens. On the election of Henry, Count of Luxemburg, as chief of the Empire, a crowd of exiles of the Ghibelline party flung themselves at his feet, imploring assistance and redress; and Henry, moved by their entreaties, and by a desire to restore order in this unquiet portion of his dominions, entered Italy in 1312. The state of comparative peace and obedience to which Germany was reduced enabled him to do this with safety; and there were circumstances in the condition of Italy itself which seemed to promise success to his expedition. The rapid progress of civilisation in that country which had been made during the last half-century, and the fact that almost every town was a state with a government and constitution of its own, combined to promote, in a high degree, the study of the law, in its best and most systematic, if not its only form, that of Imperial Rome. It is an old

saying that lawyers are always the friends of despotism ; and though that saying is only partially true in England, whose laws have been founded upon those of the free Anglo-Saxons, and have been altered in accordance with the constitutional development of her liberties, yet it has been otherwise on the Continent ;* for all or nearly all the Continental systems have been modelled after those of antiquity. The Italian jurists naturally regarded their great exemplar with feelings somewhat akin to those with which their descendants, the architects of the Cinquecento, regarded the Colosseum and the Baths of Diocletian ; nay, with even stronger feelings, for the power of the sentiment of admiration is in proportion to a nation's youth, and would therefore be more vivid in 1300 than in 1500 ; and while the remains of Roman architecture are only magnificent ruins, the Code of Justinian, rescued from the destruction which had been the lot of so many other works of ancient learning, was intact, the imposing result of the labours, throughout many generations, of the ablest lawyers of the most lawyer-like people that the world has ever known, compiled under favouring circumstances, such as were not likely to be seen again. The great principle of Roman law was that of administrative centralisation, and the point of that centralisation was the person of the Emperor. The German Kaisers, although they were themselves rather neglectful of the position which was claimed for them, were universally regarded as the legitimate successors of those of ancient Rome ; and the lawyers, finding that their system wanted a centre, naturally sought for it in them. With the rank of Augustus and Constantine they gradually began, in idea at least, to associate the power of those princes ; and as the Emperors were beyond the Alps, and

* Not invariably ; and modern Italy, whose lawyers have been foremost in the assertion of constitutional principles, is a case in point. But the reason of this has been that the petty despots of that country have conducted the government, not on the principle of any law, however imperial, but upon the negation of all law beyond their own caprices.

not, as it seemed, likely to reduce the idea into a practical reality, it was quite safe to theorise : so they talked themselves, and a great many other people too, into believing that the Emperor was entitled to exercise a despotic authority over them, and that it was very unjust to keep him out of his rights. The times were very favourable for the promulgation of this theory ; for many good and wise men, among whom was Dante, wearied to death and disgusted by the endless roar of faction and flow of blood, longed for some supreme authority who should have both the right and the power to quell the tempest, and unite all Italy under a just and paternal sway. To such a mediator they would have surrendered their liberties as to a messenger from God ; and such a one they expected to find in the Emperor.

These expectations had reference more to the Emperor's position than to anything that was known of his character : yet, had they searched the world for a prince after their own heart, I doubt whether they would have found any equally worthy of the lofty mission which they wished to set before him. From the days of Henry the Fowler onwards, the Roman Empire had been fortunate in its chiefs. Some had obtained the crown by the choice of the electors, others by hereditary succession : but almost all had been able and resolute, brave soldiers and just rulers ; and none had those qualities in a higher degree than Henry the Seventh. On his arrival in Italy, he displayed perfect impartiality between the two factions, restoring the exiles, Guelf as well as Ghibelline, to their respective cities, and using his authority to persuade or compel them to live at peace with one another. Never had absolute government worn so fair an aspect in Italy. The warning afforded by the miseries of Lombardy under her tyrants began to be lost sight of, as it was shown that monarchy was not incompatible with good government ; and at length the Emperor received the submission of a

republic, perhaps the proudest and most turbulent of all. This was Genoa. Genoa had long been disturbed by intestine wars, as violent as that between the Bianchi and the Neri, and far more lasting. The alternations of power between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines succeeded each other with great rapidity. Since the beginning of the century, the Ghibellines had prevailed: the houses of Doria and Spinola, the heads of that party, divided the supreme power between them; and hardly had they done so, when they began to quarrel. Opizzino Spinola, the head of that family, the wealthiest subject, and the most munificent patron of the arts then in Italy, was enabled by the strength of his connection to drive out his rivals: then the Dorias rallied, and drove out the Spinolas; and Opizzino appealed to the Emperor. On the latter's approach, the citizens, who, though desperately fond of fighting, had had enough of it for the present, conferred on him the *signoria*, on terms which sufficiently guaranteed their independence; and Henry set himself to work to reconcile the Spinolas with the Dorias, allowing the latter, in consideration of the restoration of their rivals, to bear the Imperial eagle on their coat of arms; and also the Ghibellines with the Guelfs. In return for his good offices, he obtained the assistance of the Genoese in an expedition which he proposed to make against the King of Naples, the heir of Charles of Anjou.

By this time it had become pretty apparent that his well-meant endeavours to restore order in Lombardy had failed. As soon as his back was turned, the factions set to work again, killing and exiling each other as before; and the free states began to think that, after all, liberty and independence were worth something, especially as it was very doubtful whether they could get anything in exchange for them. The Imperial interference had in one instance operated very injuriously for their interests. Shortly before his arrival in Italy, a coalition among some of the Lombard signors

had succeeded in ousting the formidable Visconti ; and their rivals, the house of La Torre, were restored to their country, and reinvested with its government. Henry's first act, when he reached Milan, was to recall the exiles, and force the predominant party to share their power with them in equal proportions. This act was done in perfect good faith, and not from any wish to strengthen the Ghibellines against the Guelfs ; for he had, at least at that time, no preference for one party over the other, and he had evinced his impartiality by bringing back the Guelfs into those cities where their enemies had prevailed, even as he brought back the Ghibellines into Milan. But however pure his motives might have been, he could not have made an abler stroke of partisanship if he had been a Hohenstaufen ; for the faction-fights broke out again almost immediately ; and the Visconti, who had now no external enemies to fear, and who were the cleverer, perhaps the stronger, of the two factions, speedily got the upper hand, drove the La Torres into a banishment which was to prove perpetual, and seized the reins with a firmer grasp than before. While one of the two able races of Lombard tyrants had thus recovered, and was fast extending, its old dominion between the Ticino and the Oglio, the other was gaining to itself a yet greater power to the eastward. Its chief, Can Grande della Scala, was probably at that time, after the King of Naples, the most potent prince in Italy ; he was also its ablest statesman, and its most skilful captain ; he aspired to the character of a patron of literature and the arts ; and in his court, the splendour of which was renowned even beyond the Alps, the most illustrious Ghibelline exiles from all parts of Italy found shelter and hospitality. He had been one of the first to welcome the Emperor ; and he so ingratiated himself with that prince that he had contrived to escape the fate of the other Lombard signors in having his exiles returned upon his hands.

The alarm of the Florentines may be imagined. They were Guelfs, and they were Republicans : in fact, the time was approaching when these two names were to become synonymous ; and they saw an Emperor, the *ex officio* chief of the Ghibellines, leaving behind him the whole of Lombardy in the hands of that party, advance southward, and, receiving the submission of another republic equal to their own in pride and power, make it his base of operations against the kingdom which was the stronghold of the Guelfs, and the sovereign who was their hereditary leader. They felt that some action was becoming necessary ; and they had small difficulty in inspiring others with the same sentiments. The other free states of Italy were looking anxiously on at the enemy's progress ; and the declaration of war against Naples was the signal for the formation of a league among them. All the republics of Italy, save one,* were enrolled on the list, and their enumeration will show how woefully freedom had declined since the days of the battle of Legnano. There were Florence, and Venice, and Padua, the one republic of Lombardy, and Bologna, the one republic of *Æmilia*, and Lucca, the old ally of Florence, and Siena, forgetting her Ghibellinism in order to defend her independence—but this was all. And even of that small band, Florence was the only one who would do anything towards promoting the objects of the League. The prospects of Italian liberty were not encouraging at this moment.

But the Emperor and the Genoese were beginning to tire of one another : the haughty temper of the people, whose envoy had refused at Milan to pay the obeisance which those of the other Italian powers who were present were offering him, was naturally a source of irritation to the former ; while the violation, real or supposed, by the Emperor, of the

* Perhaps I ought to have said, "save two ;" but as Genoa has conferred her *signoria* on the Emperor, perhaps I am justified in not giving her that name at this moment.

terms of the treaty by which he acquired the signory of their republic, caused still graver offence to the latter ; and all parties were probably equally delighted when the arrival of a Pisan fleet in the harbour gave Henry both the excuse and the means for departing. He went to Pisa. Whatever annoyance he had sustained from the duplicity of the Lombards and the insubordination of the Genoese, was fully made up for now. Pisa was not the great power which she had been when her flag ruled without a rival in the Western Mediterranean, and when she warded off for a time the ruin which impended over Frederick the Second, by preventing the assembling of Gregory's council : but her spirit was as high, and her heart as true as ever : her Ghibellinism was not the watchword of a faction, but a sentiment of loyalty ; and she stood nobly by her old principles still. The debt which she owed to the Empire for the favours shown her by the Hohenstaufen sovereigns had been paid by her with large interest over and over again : but she chose to consider it still unpaid ; and regarding Henry as the lineal successor of the old line which she had stood by of yore, she welcomed him to her walls with enthusiastic devotion, and bestowed upon him all the demonstrations of reverence which could be offered by a republic which still wished to remain one. She did not confer upon him, as Genoa did, her *signoria* ; but she supplied him with ships and soldiers : she freed him at her own charge from the pecuniary embarrassments which were thickening around him ; and she exhausted herself in pouring her treasures at his feet. The prince and the people were worthy of each other ; and could all the Italian states have been as Pisa, and all the Roman Emperors as Henry, it would perhaps have been well if the Ghibellines had prevailed.

One of Henry's chief objects in coming to Italy was to receive the golden crown of the Empire at Rome ; and as soon as he had been invested with it in the Lateran by the

hands of the Pope's Legate, in spite of the sulky growls of the Romans, he set himself to work to prosecute his vaster schemes. The expedition to Naples had been long given up : the Gueft League was a more formidable, as well as a nearer, antagonist than the southern kingdom ; and while King Robert, the nominal head of the Gueft party, was perhaps hardly worthy of the Emperor's sword, its heart, the Florentine republic, was an enemy to be got rid of at any cost. The Emperor, therefore, collecting a force among the Ghibellines of Central Italy, returned to Tuscany with all speed, and broke into the vale of Arno. The Florentines adopted the old tactics of the Italians in their wars against the Hohenstaufens. They stood entirely on the defensive. This policy was perhaps better suited to them than even to the old Lombards ; for the Lombards, though not, as a rule, equal to the Germans in the field, owing to their not having such a military organisation, were yet a more martial race than the Tuscans ; while the enormous growth of commerce which had been developed since the peace of Constance had tended to promote sedentary, to the exclusion of warlike, habits ; and the sanguinary contests of faction had, strange as it may seem, not only failed to counteract that tendency, but even operated in the same direction. Accordingly, they made no attempt to emulate Legnano and Fossalta, but limited their endeavours to keeping their enemy at bay under their walls till they should be relieved by their allies. This, however, their allies seemed to have no intention of doing ; nor, on their side, did the Imperialists care to risk their lives in any attempt upon the walls, finding it both easier and more profitable to vent their wrath upon the undefended country. So they lived at free quarters for some months ; and the Florentines, who, if they lacked active courage, have never been surpassed in passive endurance, looked calmly on at the havoc which was going on around them. The sight of their fields and

vineyards ravaged, and their villages in flames, could neither goad them into risking battles, nor terrify them into suing for terms ; and they waited patiently till the besiegers had helped themselves to all that was to be got, and Henry, who probably had not enjoyed the delay as much as his troops had done, raised the siege in despair. The advance during the following season of a Neapolitan army in support of the league gave hopes of a livelier campaign ; and the Emperor, at the head not only of the Pisan forces, but of a powerful German contingent, took the field, in order to sweep these new antagonists from the earth. Had he succeeded—and there was every chance of his succeeding—the war would probably have been terminated at once : for, bravely as the Florentines had held out, their losses had been very severe ; and few could expect that they should be able to sustain a repetition of such a siege against an enemy flushed by victory, especially when there was no hope of relief. But it was not the fate of Florence to be destroyed so soon. As Henry was on his march, full of prognostications of victory, at the head of his exulting army, his course was stayed by a sudden and violent sickness : some attributed it to natural causes, others to poison administered by a Dominican in the sacramental wafer ; but whatever was the cause, it terminated fatally. Henry breathed his last at Buonconvento, on the 24th August 1313, and the first great danger to the liberties of Italy passed away.

The ardour and energy of the Guelf confederation, which had been perhaps too prudently pent up while there was any real occasion for its exercise, could no longer be restrained. Venice, indeed, kept quiet : like many a lady-patroness of a charitable bazaar, she had given to the project the advantage of letting her name be inscribed on its prospectus, and thought that was enough ; and Padua had some very pressing business at home : but the rest of the

League, which was now swelled by all the Guelfs of Tuscany, Umbria, and Romagna, were in a high state of indignation and terror at the danger which might have befallen them ; and, in order to show that, though prevented by circumstances from doing anything to ward it off at the time, they were yet properly alive to it, they discharged the full torrent of their accumulated wrath upon the head of Pisa. But if they hoped for a cheap display of their valour and resolution, they were grievously disappointed. Attacked on all sides by overpowering enemies, and unsupported by a single friend, the Pisans proved themselves worthy of their old renown. They had at starting one great advantage over their enemies ; they could fight, and fight in the field as well as behind stone walls. And this led to another advantage, in giving them a clearer knowledge of the qualities required in their leader. The Florentines and their allies, with a proper regard for the dignity of the Guelf League, placed at their head two illustrious personages, the son and the brother of the King of Naples : the Pisans selected as their general Ugucione da Fagginola, a Romagnol, who had been long connected with them, and who possessed in an eminent degree those military talents which seemed to be the exclusive privilege of the Ghibelline nobles. Under his guidance, they not only succeeded in making good their ground against their enemies, but even in turning the tide of invasion upon them. The Ghibellines all through Tuscany rose, and carried distraction into the hostile territories ; and the Pisans, victorious in every encounter, drove their enemies before them like sheep. One of the leaders of the confederacy, Lucca, was forced to submit to the yoke of the city which she thought to find an easy conquest, and become a Pisan province ; and when the whole force of the League, headed by both the Neapolitan princes, advanced to recover their loss, they were encountered at Montecatini, and defeated with great slaughter, King Robert's

brother being among the slain. It might have seemed that Pisa would achieve, single-handed, the conquest of Tuscany. But Uguccione was not to be trusted: the powers which had been conferred on him for the purposes of the war were used by him to pave his way to absolute sovereignty; and he began, before long, to treat the citizens as if they were not his masters but his subjects. Considering the facility with which the towns beyond the Apennines had given their sovereignty to the first powerful neighbour or party-leader who took the trouble to ask them to do so, he was perhaps not unreasonable in expecting that he might be allowed to assume it in this case, as a reward for his great and undoubted services. But the loyalty of the Pisans to the Emperor did not spring from any love of despotism. Much as they loved military glory, they loved liberty more; and they refused to submit to a master, even though he should offer them the equivalent of making their city the capital of Tuscany. A rising took place against the authority of Uguccione simultaneously at Pisa and at Lucca; and Uguccione, surprised and unprepared for resistance, was overthrown as Ugolino had been before him. Less guilty than that notorious traitor, he was also more fortunate: he escaped with life, and passed the rest of his days in exile at the court of the greatest living master of the art in which he had failed, Can Grande della Scala.

That art was a very common one at the time of which I am speaking. It may be remembered that, in the slight reference which I made to the history of ancient Rome at the beginning of this sketch, I noticed that the prominence of individual names and the display of individual talent is proportioned to the decline of freedom and civic virtue. It is the same in the history of mediæval Italy. In the spring period few names stand out from the crowd: a few appear during the second half of it, from 1200 to 1250, when already the process of deterioration had set in,

but not many even then—at least among the Guelfs ; but from 1150 to 1200 there are absolutely none. I do not know in the least who headed the defence of Tortona, Crema, and Milan ; who were the consuls who presided over the formation of the Lombard League ; who led the Milanese at Legnano ; or who, on behalf of the Italians, signed the peace of Constance. Doubtless there are means of obtaining information on these points ; and if this were a regular history, I should have to be ashamed of my confession: but the names do not, at any rate, lie on the surface, and one may attain to a fair general idea of Italian history without knowing them, or in fact a single name of that period, except those of Frederick Barbarossa, Christian of Mentz, Alexander the Third, and perhaps Sebastian Ziani. It is different afterwards. Even between 1200 and 1250 a good many great figures begin to appear among the Ghibellines, among whom Eccelino and Farinata are perhaps the most prominent ; but it is not till the period of summer, when, with the struggle for national independence, had passed away the virtues which such a struggle naturally generates, that the historical gallery is thickly set with portraits. The times, like those of the Roman civil wars, were just such as are generally fruitful in great men : there was still enough national energy to produce talent and ambition, and not enough to restrain them within due bounds ; and while patriotism and public spirit were fast withering under the shade of the military and political excellence which they had fostered, their decline had not yet reached the point at which the latter, having destroyed that which, in the first instance, sustained them, in their turn give way to effeminacy and incompetence. The civic virtues yet lingered, and in some cases flourished, among the republics, which were generally Guelf ; and, consequently, in them the state was of more importance than any of the men of whom it was composed : but it was not

so with the tyrannies. From among them there sprang up at this period, in thick luxuriance, a crowd of generals and statesmen, all approaching to the same stamp ; uniting unmeasured lust after power with untiring energy and indomitable courage and resolution, and wonderful keenness of vision ; adored by their soldiers, respected by their subjects, and dreaded much by their enemies, and not a little by their friends—for even in the most favourable instances they were not much under the control of scruples when they interfered with their ambition. Such was Uguccone da Faggiuola ; such was Can Grande della Scala, and the two who had preceded him in the lordship of Verona : such were Matteo and Galeazzo Visconti, who in succession ruled at Milan : such, above all, was the famous chief, from whom arose the *second* of the great dangers which in this century beset the republic of Florence.

This personage appears upon the stage immediately after the fall of Uguccone, but it was not for several years after that period that his power becomes really formidable. During that interval events crowd upon one another, the horizon becoming darker and darker every year. Padua, oppressed by the arms of the lord of Verona, has sacrificed her liberty to the house of Carrara : Bertrand de Poiet, nephew of Pope John the Twenty-second, has appeared in Romagna with the object of founding a sovereignty on the donation of Constantine, and has succeeded in combining several small tyrannies into a tyranny of some magnitude : Matteo Visconti, having triumphed in a series of contests with the Guelfs, has made himself lord paramount in Central and Western Lombardy, and advanced an army, composed of the Ghibellines of that district, to secure the triumph of his party in Liguria ; and Genoa, where the renewed quarrels of the Dorias and Spinolas have prostrated both together at the feet of the Guelfs, has been forced to seek shelter from the hostility of the Ghibellines

by giving herself up to the sovereignty of Robert of Naples, The Lombards, led by Marco Visconti, the best soldier of his family, and one of the best of his time, speedily overrun Liguria, and, supported by the exiled Dorias and Spinolas, have shut up the Genoese within the walls of their city, while the Sicilian fleet, in alliance with them, is disputing with that of King Robert the mastery of the sea. The struggle between Guelf and Ghibelline seems to be narrowed to this point: the rest of Italy is being slowly drawn into it; and it is during its course that the war between liberty and tyranny breaks out again in Tuscany in a more formidable shape than before.

Of all the communities of Tuscany, the one which bore most resemblance to those on the north of the Apennines was Lucca. That intense love of liberty which, in spite of their varying politics, and still more varying characters, and their sincere hatred of one another, burnt so strongly in the hearts of the Pisans, the Sienese, and the Florentines, was much less vivid there. I have noticed before that, while all these three, and in a less degree, some of the other races of Tuscany also, rivalled each other and surpassed all the rest of Italy at this time in their schools of art, the Lucchese stood alone in making no attempt to produce anything of the kind. Generally speaking, I think I shall be able to make out a tolerable case for the rise and fall of art in any state in accordance with its power and freedom; but with Lucca I cannot do so. She has had, at an early period, a genius for art, as exemplified in the department in which early art is generally developed—her architecture; and during the latter half of the thirteenth century, she has played a not unworthy part in politics; nor has she lacked commercial enterprise, as she was the first city in Italy which introduced the propagation of silk-worms. In most Italian states—Venice and Florence are the most prominent examples—commercial greatness comes first, then political,

and artistic last. In Lucca the rule seems to have been reversed.* Whatever be the cause of this transposition, she seems of yore to have been the residence of a bold and high-spirited people. She was the capital of the "Great Countess," Matilda of Tuscany; and I have a sort of impression that, in the infancy of the Tuscan communes, she took the lead among them, or at least among the landward ones. But if this ever was the case, it was so no longer; she had declined in power and in the character of her citizens. The Lucchese bore at this period, if we may believe Dante, a very bad reputation for dishonesty in money matters; and with a stain of this sort on their national character, it is not to be wondered at if their primitive independence and generosity of spirit had a little worn off. Accordingly, we find them, after joining in the somewhat cowardly attack upon Pisa, which had been got up by the Florentines, suffering their necks to be bowed under the Pisan yoke; and, after the revolution against Uguccione had restored their independence, the first use which they made of it was to throw themselves at the feet of another tyrant, who, if he differed at all from him whom they had discarded, differed for the worse.

Castruccio Castracani, the new master of the republic, was one of the foremost men of his time, both as a soldier and as a politician. His natural military talents had been cultivated and developed in the Transalpine wars; and his genius was

* I will let this stand: but I think it ought to be taken with considerable modifications. The introduction of the silk manufacture must have taken place about the middle of the twelfth century; and probably she had obtained commercial eminence before that time. She had, it is true, been a city of considerable power and importance, politically, a century earlier: but that was not as a republic, but as a feudal capital. And as for her art, its principal development can hardly have taken place before 1050: in fact, her Cathedral is distinctly later than that of Pisa, which is after that date. The truth is, that what I said about the seasons of the political and architectural history of Pisa beginning earlier than the dates which I have started from in this sketch, applies to Lucca in a much stronger degree.

never allowed to be hampered by any regard to honour, humanity, or good faith. His politics, like those of most of those whom he resembled, were Ghibelline ; but in spite of their party connection, his formidable character excited the jealousy of Uguccone, who saw no safety for his projects of dominion while such a rival was at liberty, and accordingly contrived to get him into his power, and shut him up in prison. After the revolution he regained his freedom, and speedily rose to the first place among his fellow-citizens ; he was their captain-general in the war in which the fall of the common enemy engaged them with Pisa : the Pisans, who were pretty well exhausted when it commenced, were unable to reconquer their lost possession against such an antagonist ; and by the time the war was over, Castruccio had contrived to do what Uguccone had attempted, and paid himself for his services to his country by making himself its master. He speedily took means to secure his power by putting to death all from whom he had any reason to apprehend resistance, including several from whom he had received benefits, and then proceeded to make war upon freedom abroad. The great battle between the two principles was at this moment being waged beneath the walls of Genoa, and thither Castruccio betook himself. He carried to the camp of the Ghibellines not only a large reinforcement of troops, but a quick eye, a daring spirit, and a power of inspiring confidence into his soldiers, surpassing that of Marco Visconti himself, and very far superior to that of the King of Naples. The investment of the city on the landward side was soon completed, and the Genoese, in great alarm, called for assistance upon the Guelf Confederacy.

These proceedings on the part of Castruccio were naturally viewed by the Florentines with suspicion and fear. They had recently introduced into their own government changes which, if they answered no other beneficial end, at least proved their adherence to the doctrine of popu-

lar sovereignty on a very extended scale : but in the free and almost indiscriminate admission which they made to the honours of government, they were careful that those admitted should be commoners (*popolani*), and should be Guelfs ; and, under these circumstances, it must have been somewhat bitter to see a neighbouring republic, once held to be one of the very stanchest members of the Guelf League, become the seat of a tyranny the most active and unscrupulous that had yet been seen, and, under the guidance of its new master, send forth an army to join the forces of the Ghibelline despots against an allied city whose principles were the same as their own. It was pretty obvious that the fall of Genoa would be but the prelude to an attack upon themselves, and an attack of a much more serious nature than that from which they had lately escaped as by fire. Accordingly, they heaved themselves up, and waddled out (such expressions appear to me to indicate best the manner in which this respectable but clumsy state waged war), and struck some very hard blows at Lucca, which, in the absence of her lord, she was ill able to parry. Castruccio saw his danger, and faced round in an instant ; left to the Lombards and Sicilians the task of prosecuting the war in Liguria, and hurried homeward. The war between Guelf and Ghibelline was now raging all over Italy. Naples and Sicily, indeed, were fortunate in being able to fight each other at a safe distance from home ; but Liguria, Æmilia, Comarca, Venetia, perhaps even Piedmont and Central Lombardy, were the scene of close hand-to-hand conflicts between their different towns and signories ; and fully as fierce, and far more important, was the strife which, after long smouldering, now burst out again in Tuscany.

The change which had been effected in the Florentine constitution was on this wise :—All the officers of every sort and kind in the city, whether of the state or of public bodies, were required to make out schedules of all the persons, Guelfs of course, and not nobles, whom they considered

fit to hold office. All interests were represented. There was the government, and the military interest, and the commercial interests, and the manufacturing interests, and the interests of the "Guelf Party"—a sort of institution analogous to Brookes's or the Carlton; and the schedules, after being drawn up, were revised by a body constituted for the purpose, and called the "Baliá," who struck out all whom they did not consider capable, and apportioned the rest to the offices which they seemed fitted for. Their names were then put into separate bags, one for each office, and drawn out whenever the magistrates were changed, which took place every two months. At the conclusion of three years and a half the votes were destroyed, and the whole business began again *da capo*. I do not know that this form of nomination was a very bad one. The exclusion of the Ghibellines was perhaps just on the ground of security, and that of the nobles on that of retribution; and the responsible character of the persons by whom the nominations were made, and still more the subjection of the schedules to revision, was perhaps a sufficient guarantee against any dangers that might have resulted from the extreme liberality of the principles upon which they were made. But the system of changing all the magistrates every two months, when coupled with the new rule of selection, was sure to operate injuriously. It arose, no doubt, from the laudable desire that all respectable citizens should have their share in the honours of government—a desire which had nothing in common with the place-hunting mania which is one of the curses of the present day, and which, as all offices were purely gratuitous, was highly creditable to the people. But it is impossible to work such a system unless the persons who succeed to office in rotation are a very limited class, and consequently all more or less imbued with official traditions, and provided with official experience. The evil results of a frequent change of the whole staff of government has been much felt in the United States, where the change only takes place once

in four years ; and although I do not fancy that it was carried out so completely into every petty department at Florence, and though it would be ridiculous to suppose that the inconveniences of the system would have been felt in the fourteenth century as they would in the nineteenth, it was undoubtedly a great error. The Venetians might change the members of the Doge's Council, and the Council of Ten, as often as they pleased, without doing much harm ; but at Florence, where the rulers were taken from the body of the people, they should have allowed them time to gain a little stability.

Perhaps the Florentines might have got on very well under the new arrangement if they had only had to attend to matters at home. The chief object was to keep order and prevent faction, and for this object it was desirable that the Government should enjoy the confidence of the citizens, which there was no better means of securing than by taking its members from that class as freely as possible ; and that it should be administered by men, patriotic, honest, and resolute, and of such there was fortunately no lack. But at this moment they had to attend to something more than matters at home ; and a series of batches of respectable merchants, succeeding each other at intervals of two months, was not exactly the best form for a ministry of war, especially when their antagonist was Castruccio Castracani. The war was, as might have been expected, something like a fight between a huge country bumpkin and a light wiry prize-fighter. The Florentines took a great deal of punishing, and sometimes contrived to get a hit at their enemy : but this was not often : Castruccio pushed on, taking from them town after town ; and the principal success which they obtained, that of saving Prato from his grasp, led to a feud in the camp between the nobles and commoners, which spread itself to the city, and of course was highly conducive to vigorous operations against the enemy. Perhaps it was the weakness which

was thus caused which induced the signory to intrust the command of their forces to a Spaniard, Ramon de Cardona, a general who had come to Italy to make money in the service of the Pope's Legate. The idea was a good one, perhaps : but they were unfortunate in their choice : Cardona viewed his engagement in a purely pecuniary light, and the readiest mode that occurred to him for attaining his object was, to induce the rich merchants who followed his camp from patriotic motives to pay him for leave to depart, by giving them a taste of the pleasures of a campaigning life under difficulties. So he led them backwards and forwards through the very unhealthiest morasses he could find ; and the result fully answered his expectations. Unfortunately he had no means of confining the malaria to those upon whom he wished it to operate ; and by the time that he had come to the conclusion that the claims of business would allow him to turn his attention to the less important matter of conducting the war, his army was much weakened by disease. However, that was no affair of his ; he led it into action at Altopascio, in the Lucchese territory, and got such a defeat as no other Italian army had suffered for a considerable time. The Florentines reaped one advantage from it, for Cardona was killed in the action ; * but the slaughter of the citizens was frightful ; and so great was the effect that, according to Machiavelli, they had hard work to save the city. Before they could recover from the blow, others followed in quick succession. News arrived that their allies, the Bolognese, had sustained at Monteveglio a defeat hardly less crushing than their own : that in their terror they had surrendered their liberties to the legate Bertrand de Poiet ; and finally, to fill up the measure of despair, that the new Emperor, Louis of Bava-

* So, at least, says Machiavelli ; but he is often inaccurate, and I believe this is an instance of it. However, it does not much matter practically, for Cardona, if he was not killed, was taken prisoner ; and at any rate he ceases to command the Florentine armies.

ria, had crossed the Alps, had been welcomed as their chief by the Lombard Ghibellines, and that the most favoured and honoured of his supporters was Castruccio Castracani.

The Florentines might well be excused if, for a moment, they quailed before the perils around them. The Guelph League had disappeared : Padua was now a tyranny : Bologna, the city of the band which stood second to Florence alone, was next door to a tyranny ; and Siena and Perugia, the only two republics which remained, hated each other worse than they did the Ghibellines. But that which had seemed to be their greatest danger helped to save them. Louis of Bavaria was not in any respect equal to his predecessor : he had no high-flown ideas of restoring order and administering justice : he came to Italy for two distinct purposes : one was to get the Imperial crown ; the other to extract as much money as he could. The first business could afford to wait a little ; the latter could not : and he took advantage of the hospitality which Galeazzo Visconti, son and successor of Matteo, extended to him at Milan, to get up a *coup d'état* against him, not among the people, but among the mercenaries, throw him and all his family into prison, and not let them out till he had exacted such a ransom as nearly ruined them, seizing, at the same time, the signory for himself. He then offered to let them have it back again for a large sum of money : but they had no money left to give him ; and as he had got all that was to be had in that quarter, he went to see what was to be picked up out of Tuscany.

The loyal city of Pisa was somewhat chilled in her attachment to the Imperial name by these proofs of the gratitude and good faith of its present possessor ; and even had this not been the case, she was at this moment in no condition to make sacrifices. Hardly had she been forced to surrender Lucca to Castruccio, when her possessions in Sardinia were

suddenly attacked without provocation by the King of Aragon. Two great Genoese families, the Serras and the Dorias, who held extensive fiefs there, joined the enemy ; and after fighting desperately for three years to retain her hold upon the island, she was obliged to yield to superior force, and consent to its abandonment. Louis, however, had no mercy upon her weakness : he insisted upon 150,000 florins, and threatened to put her envoys to death if it was not paid : so it *was* paid by great exertion ; and Louis enjoyed the satisfaction of giving the last blow to achieve the ruin of the republic which had often before voluntarily brought herself to the verge of it in fighting the battles of his predecessors. The further fortunes of this chivalrous prince do not concern us much. Castruccio got him off to Rome, where he was crowned by an antipope, set up for the occasion : he treated his friends in that quarter much as he had done Galeazzo Visconti, till the trick became too stale to be successfully tried any longer ; drew upon himself universal detestation and contempt ; and at length, in the words of a Genoese historian, went back to Germany with the Imperial crown on his head, and remorse in his bosom.

The Emperor's departure had no effect on the war in Tuscany. He had had the good sense, when in that country, to put himself entirely under the guidance of Castruccio, who not only escaped the fate of Galeazzo Visconti, but was loaded with honours, and supported in all his projects. He accompanied Louis to Rome, and was revolving vast schemes of empire, to be carried out so soon as the coronation was over, when he was startled by the intelligence that the Florentines had taken advantage of his absence to attack his territories, and had actually made themselves masters of Pistoia. The war, thus rekindled, raged furiously, with much the same success as before. In spite of the republican tendencies of the Florentines, they were much given to

put their trust in princes: the prince whom they put their trust in at this moment was the Duke of Calabria, eldest son of Robert of Naples; and not being able to get him at a lesser price, they conferred on him their signory. It was only for a time, and they hoped to guarantee themselves by the spirit of their citizens against his making an oppressive use of it; but there was felt a good deal of uneasiness as to whether the remedy was not almost as bad as the disease. In spite of the blow given to their party by Louis, the good fortune of the Ghibellines still prevailed. Padua, no longer a republic, but still a city of the Guelfs, after a struggle of several years, was at length swallowed up by the rapacious jaws of the Great Dog of Verona; and all Eastern Lombardy followed. Pisa, reduced to a state of almost mortal exhaustion by internal faction and foreign war, gave herself up to Castruccio: Pistoia was recovered by him soon afterwards; and the conquest of Tuscany seemed at hand. But while the cavalry of Castruccio scoured up to the gates of Florence, while the banners of the Scalas were advanced up the Lagoons of Venice, the impending ruin was suddenly averted from both republics: Castruccio Castracani and Can Grande della Scala were summoned away in the flower of their age in the year 1329: Galeazzo Visconti had died a few months before: and the rushing torrent of Ghibelline aggression was checked at the very moment at which it seemed about to burst the last dykes that were raised to oppose it. The liberties of Florence were not yet quite secure: but the death of Castruccio was speedily followed by that of the Duke of Calabria. The extraordinary good fortune of the Florentines in being freed from danger by the deaths of those they had to dread, has been often remarked upon, and we shall have occasion to notice it again. It is said that fortune favours the bold; and we may, I think, consider that this republic had done something to deserve her assistance: that assistance was

certainly needed ; for without it there was hardly any hope that any amount of boldness could have saved her from the *second* great danger of the fourteenth century—that from Castruccio Castracani.

The *third* danger to liberty was not of such a formidable character as the two former ones. The deaths of the great Ghibelline chiefs, some of whose names I have mentioned, left their party disorganised. The same causes which produced so many great leaders among them was a source of weakness to them in other ways: the strength and vigour which among the Guelfs were distributed with some appearance of evenness over the whole body, were among their rivals concentrated on one point ; and this arrangement, however favourable to showy and effective action, was not calculated to produce endurance. It is not often that a nation has the opportunity of seeing within itself the phenomenon of two different stages of history at the same time: but this advantage the Italians had ; and their statesmen could compare in many cases a republic in the course of its development, and a tyranny springing out of another republic's decline, existing within a few miles of one another. If ever the phantom of Imperialism, as we understand it—of a strong and able military despotism, wielded by a chief of their own blood, who, master all over the Peninsula, should be in a condition to extend his empire abroad—had flitted before the eyes of the Italians (which, thus undisguisedly stated, I do not think it had), they must have been wakened out of their dream now. The decline and helplessness of the Ghibelline party was pitiable. Aggression had become the law of their nature ; and they were now suddenly deprived of the means of satisfying it. The example of Pisa, after the death of Henry the Seventh, showed that the Guelfs were very likely to wish to exact vengeance for the fright they had had, and they were not conscious of the innate vigour which had enabled Pisa to

save herself. Their natural leaders gave them very little hope. Robert of Naples was still lord of Genoa, and the Dorias and Spinolas, defeated in their attempts to enter their country by force, were chafing in exile. The fabric of dominion which Matteo and Galeazzo Visconti had erected for their party in Central Lombardy had been shattered to pieces by the effects of Louis's treachery; and Mastino, the heir of the name and power of his father, Can Grande della Scala, had not as yet developed the talents and ambition which, at a later period, rendered him so formidable. Thus, while the old Guelf stage-coach, drawn by horses strong of limb and sound in wind, was working steadily forward in the race, the Ghibelline locomotive had come to a dead stand for lack of fuel, and the company had to do, what we were told no long time since that we shall have to do in a few years—import their coal from abroad. The material they supplied themselves with was of a very explosive character, and could not always be trusted; but they had no choice, and they invited into Italy the son of their fondly remembered chief, Henry the Seventh.

This was John, King of Bohemia, the same who afterwards fell fighting in the French ranks at the battle of Cressy, and whose crest and motto from that time forward have been the badge of our Princes of Wales. His character was well suited to the way in which he met his death; the blind old man who, refusing to share the flight of his allies, insisted upon being led to the charge in the midst of the rout, and preferred an inevitable death to the chance of surviving a defeat, was, in his youth and early manhood, a *preux chevalier* of the olden time, the soul of honour, passionately attached to glory, but incapable of fixing his mind long on one object, and, consequently, fickle and inconstant in his projects; a good knight-errant, but unfitted for sovereignty. Henry, imitating Rodolf of Hapsburg, had taken advantage of his tenure of the imperial crown to secure to his family

the great fief of Bohemia ; and this accordingly John inherited. He did not care to try for the Empire, probably thinking it too much trouble : he liked better to live in Paris, displaying his skill in tournaments, reading ‘*Amadis de Gaul*,’ and making love to the ladies of the French court ; and he left the highest prize in Christendom to be fought for by those who thought it worth their while to do so, the Wittelsbachs and the Hapsburgs ; nay, so far from resenting his exclusion, he lent all his support to the former, who, as we have seen, were ultimately successful. The appeal, however, of the Italians touched him very nearly. The perpetual wars and fightings of that country must have had considerable attractions for one to whom they offered such a wide field for martial glory ; and to appear as the redresser of grievances, the raiser from the dust of a cause in the service of which his father had died, was an enterprise still more congenial to his chivalrous spirit. Accordingly, he crossed the Alps and appeared at Brescia at the end of the year 1330. He was welcomed with ardour : he received the signoria of that city : all the cities of the second rank in Lombardy which had either broken away from Milan, or, though never yet subdued by her, were in dread of being so, hastened to follow the example of Brescia ; and even Milan herself, where Azzo Visconti had contrived to retain a fragment of the power of his family, was induced to do the same, Azzo consenting to be satisfied with the title of royal lieutenant. Finally, Lucca, distracted between the impending danger of Florentine hostility and the actual pressure of a body of mercenaries, who were maltreating her most shamefully, and putting her up to auction to the highest bidder, called in his assistance, and made him her lord. He fulfilled the expectations entertained of him. Considering the alternations of misery which the cities which now belonged to him had been suffering for a long while, anarchy succeeding to misrule, and misrule to anarchy, any

tolerably good government would have seemed perfection; and John's government was more than tolerable. He was as well-intentioned, as just, impartial, and merciful as his father had been, and was far more favourably circumstanced; for the mutual hatred of the factions which had so grievously frustrated Henry's desires for the common good was for the time exhausted, and there seemed to be no spirits potent enough to lash it up again; and Italy seemed again to be able to purchase happiness by the sacrifice of liberty.

Perhaps this was the best fate that could have befallen Lombardy and *Æmilia*; for those regions had long since reached the imperial or tyrannical stage of development: but it was not the case with Tuscany. Florence, and the communities of that district which followed her lead, were not prepared to admit that the experiment of self-government had failed, and they had no intention of allowing themselves to be compelled to do so. The very excellence of the monarchical rule which was established at their door increased the danger; for it only rendered it more probable that its example would prove contagious, and there was no sort of guarantee that its character would not deteriorate. Even if the flighty character of the King had not rendered it very likely that there would be a change during his life, none could tell what his successor would be like. Dante had long ago warned them that human goodness is not a heritable quality; and since that time the sentiment had been illustrated by so many examples, that the progressive decline of families might almost be considered a natural law. John had not as yet made any movement to disturb their liberties; but there were not wanting counsellors to urge him to do so. His appetite for war and conquest was well known; and the Florentines foreseeing that they would have to fight sooner or later, resolved to stretch a point of international justice, and gain one of military advantage, by striking the first blow.

To attack single-handed a dominion which extended from

the foot of the Alps to the shores of the Tuscan Sea would have been to court certain destruction; and Florence looked about for allies. These it was not so easy to find. The Guelf stage-coach, of which I spoke before, was beginning to lag: some of the horses had slipped their traces, and others were dead beat; and though she herself was as strong and willing as ever, she could not hope to pull it up so stiff a hill alone. So, to drop metaphor, she swallowed her principles, and determined to make unto herself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; or, in other words, she made an alliance against John with the most thorough-going Ghibellines and tyrants she could find—Azzo Visconti, Mastino della Scala, and the Marquis of Este*—by the terms of which they were to make a simultaneous attack upon his territories, and to divide the spoil, the Lombard and Æmilian cities being allotted to the three signors, and Florence herself taking possession of Lucca. Oh Florence, Florence! you should have felt that you were abandoning your best stronghold, in forgetting those principles of right which it was your part and should have been your privilege to maintain, even to your own hurt. You had no business to attack an unoffending neighbour; you had no business to be seen in company with such notorious characters as those you now thought fit to consort with; still less had you any business to agree to help them to kidnap the poor fellows who were living very contentedly under King John, for the purpose of robbing and overworking them as you knew they would; and above all, what right had you to ask their assistance to make a slave

* The Estes were, strictly speaking, Guelfs: but as time went on, the tyrannies became more and more inclined to call themselves Ghibelline, that being the party to which most of them belonged at starting; while the republics, with the exception of Pisa, by degrees adopted the title of Guelf. Practically it made very little difference what the lords of Ferrara called themselves: for their government, though perhaps a degree better, was the same in kind as that of their Ghibelline neighbours, the Scalas and the Visconti: but I *think* they had by this time given up even the nominal difference.

of unhappy Lucca, who had been your friend no long time since, and who had a right to expect you, if you could not leave her alone, to restore her to freedom? You will suffer for your behaviour, and pretty severely.

Even with the assistance which the Florentines *had* secured, the task was by no means an easy one. John's dominions were far larger than those of any of his antagonists separately—nearly as large as those of all put together; and though straggling, they were not in detached pieces like those of his enemies, and, consequently, his communications were open; whereas none of them, unless, perhaps, the Scalas and Estes, could assist one another without crossing hostile ground: he had, besides, the advantage which a single belligerent always has against a league—that of undisputed unity of action; and not one of his assailants could come near him in personal courage and military experience. But he was already getting tired of his sovereignty; the Italians smacked too much of the *mezzo ceto* to suit his taste; and they had a preference for underhand dealings, dark conspiracies, and popular revolutions, which were both vulgar and unchivalrous. He had done his best to govern them well, and thought he had succeeded; but really their society was not so charming that he could not exist without it; and if they were going to resort to any dirty tricks against him (and indeed two or three conspiracies had been hatched against him at Parma and elsewhere), he should make them his bow, and let them find out for themselves how they liked a change of masters. I do not know whether he put those sentiments into words, but he acted on them. He sold the cities which belonged to him to anybody who would pay him what he thought their value, turned his back upon Italy, and never rested till he found himself in his beloved Paris again, leaving the Lombard Ghibellines to scramble for the spoil, and Florence to rejoice in having escaped for the *third* time from the danger of falling under a kingdom of Northern Italy.

Poor Florence! her rejoicing was premature. Do what she would, she could not get hold of Lucca. A band of German soldiery had again established themselves there, and set her at defiance. It was quite impossible to drive them out by her own strength, for she was not clever at soldiering; and so she turned to her allies, who were more used to the sort of work, to see what they would do for her. Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona, was the most powerful of the three; he had inherited, as I have said, all his father's conquests in Venetia, and had lately added to them Parma, and, I think, Brescia and Bergamo too. To him, therefore, they applied. Mastino was the most obliging person in the world: he offered to do all they wished, only asking something from their liberality in acknowledgment of his trouble. The Florentines were only too happy. What the amount of the "something" was I do not know; but, judging from the character of both parties, it probably was pretty large. Mastino took the money—employed it, or part of it, in paying the Germans to withdraw, occupied the city with his own troops, and gave it to be understood that he meant to keep it for himself.

There must have been long faces at the Palazzo Vecchio when the news of this arrived. The accession of Lucca to the dominions of the Scala made him the most powerful prince that Northern Italy had seen since the days of the Lombard kingdom—more powerful than Eccelino, or Can Grande, or Matteo Visconti, or John of Bohemia himself. The ladder, the heraldic emblem which so well expressed the mounting ambition of the Scalas, was displayed upon the ramparts of a chain of cities, once powerful and famous republics, extending from sea to sea: but one step was required to set it against the walls of Florence herself; and what security was there that that step would not be taken? Mastino, in spite of his name, had more of the lurcher than

of the mastiff in his nature, and perhaps was all the more formidable on that account. He had given no proof of any great military capacity, though probably even in that respect he was superior to any general whom Florence could send against him ; but he was, as a politician, crafty and astute, and these qualities were guided by insatiable ambition, and totally unrestrained by any rules of morality. It must have given an exquisite finish to the anger and alarm of the Signoria that the danger which threatened them—the *fourth* of the dangers to which their republic, and the cause which it represented, were during this period exposed—had been entirely owing to themselves.

One would have thought they had had enough of the policy of trusting to others, but perhaps it was the only one open to them. So they set themselves to work to look for allies, and they succeeded in finding one of a more promising character than those they had lately had. The expansion of the Scala dominions had, it is needless to say, been looked upon with no pleasurable sensation at Venice. That republic had hitherto made it the rule of her policy to abstain from interference in mainland affairs, and to seek for aggrandisement exclusively beyond the sea ; and in the single instance in which she had broken through that rule—that of Ferrara above-mentioned—the event was not encouraging to repeat the experiment : but she could not be indifferent to the rapid and progressive growth of a power which, even at the death of Can Grande, had threatened her existence. She had, besides, another incentive to action. The dethroned lords of Padua, the Carraras, still possessed a considerable party in that city : the mercy or folly of the Scalas, who not only spared the lives of these signors, but even admitted them to confidence, gave them abundant facilities for intrigue ; and the plots which they concocted were carried on with the full knowledge of the Doge's council. An infringement which they persuaded

Mastino to make upon the salt monopoly, which Venice had hitherto enjoyed, gave the republic a pretext—perhaps a justification—for a declaration of war. The Carraras opened the gates of Padua to her armies; and their treachery, which was excused by an attempt which Mastino, at length aware of their intrigues, made to have them assassinated, was rewarded by the restoration to them of their ancient sovereignty. The war went on. Florence, as I have said, was not good at soldiering, but she contributed to its success in her usual way, by paying very largely. By her liberal “subventions” (to Anglicise an Italian word) and their own well-directed energy, the Venetians were enabled to drive the Veronese forces before them, till Mastino was brought to his knees, and forced to accept peace on such terms as they pleased to dictate. Padua was ceded to the Carraras; and Treviso, and a large slice of territory to the northward, to Venice; and the latter, thinking she had now got all she wanted, and not caring to spoil her bargain by making any further demands, ratified these conditions, leaving her ally to shift for herself as best she might. The Florentines were no nearer Lucca than before.

But there is a turn in the fortunes of all men, and that turn had taken place in those of Mastino. The Venetians, if they had done their allies no direct good by the war, had, at any rate, put a term to the advancing flood of Scala greatness, and its ebb was as rapid as its flow had been. The loss which he had now sustained of at least half of his dominion in Eastern Lombardy, the stronghold of his power, was followed by that of Parma, which revolted soon after the peace; and Mastino, who had not the patient and resolute temper which can behold undismayed the failure of all its schemes, and set itself to work calmly and pertinaciously to repair the shattered web, seeing his communication thus cut off, hastily concluded that its possession would be of no further use to him, and offered to sell it to

the Florentines. The latter were not even yet tired of paying. Mastino, measuring the value of this possession by the eagerness of his customers, and not being troubled with a lively sense of shame, made a large demand ; but the frequent disappointments of the Florentines had whetted their appetite till it was ravenous ; and they were rich, and could afford to pay. So they gave him what he asked, and set forth to take possession. But there is many a slip between the cup and lip. An unexpected obstacle appeared, and that obstacle was a Pisan army. The vitality of Pisa was something extraordinary. Each successive blow which she had received since the battle of Meloria had told upon her more heavily than the last : her navy was but a shadow of what it had been, her commerce was ruined, her colonies had been wrested away ; even her proud republican spirit had been forced to bow ; and for a moment she had submitted to acknowledge a master—one, indeed, whom many states would have been proud to obey, but whose greatness could be to her no compensation for the loss of her freedom. But her warlike genius still remained. It had been found sufficient to bear her through many dangers before ; and she trusted to it again now. The occupation of Lucca by the Florentines would, if secured, be tantamount to her own destruction. Not only would it make an enormous addition to the large dominions which the latter already possessed, but it would open to them a way to the sea, and give them a harbour for their commerce, thus depriving her of the sole advantage which remained to her. She roused herself, therefore, to make a last effort—marched an army into the Lucchese territory, and laid siege to the city. The Florentines, furious at the prospect of having their prey snatched from their grasp, made strenuous endeavours to relieve it : but it was all in vain : the elephant was no match for the tiger ; it was beyond the latter's power to pull his huge antagonist down, but he baffled his unwieldy

movements, and, contriving to get hold of him, mangled him so that he was glad to release himself at any price. Peace was at length concluded ; and when it was concluded, Lucca remained in the power of the Pisans.

Surely in the range of English comedy there must be something like the succession of events which I have been speaking of. A very fair plot for a farce might be made out of it, somewhat of this sort. John Florins has made a large fortune in trade, and wants to set up as a gentleman ; he cultivates the society of the gay young sparks about town, such as Viscount Milan, Lord Scales, and Sir Ferrers East ; and he lays siege to the heart of the rich young widow, Lady Lucre, relict of that distinguished officer, Sir Castlerich Lucre, G.C.B., partly for the sake of her fortune, partly for that of her position. His aristocratic acquaintances condescend to be civil to him, for they sometimes get a good thing out of him, and make him pay the bill for their joint amusements. But John is a clumsy wooer, and Lady Lucre, though a sad flirt, does not care to conceal that she dislikes him. So in his difficulty he applies to his friend Lord Scales, whom he justly supposes to have more experience in these matters than he has, and asks his assistance, which Lord Scales, enjoying the joke, promises to give, stipulating, however, that John shall pay his debts for him. This being satisfactorily settled, his lordship pays his addresses to Lady Lucre, who seems so much pleased with him, that John begins to have an inkling that all is not right, and that his friend is doing a stroke of business for himself ; and at last he finds that it is the talk of the town that they are to be married. Our friend is furious ; and in order to punish such treachery, he introduces himself to the great Lady Venetia St Mark, who lives in Lord Scales's county, and has such large sums invested in Eastern securities. She has some quarrel with his lordship, who has been buying up all the land round

her, and even in sight of her windows, and has lately interfered with some salt-works on her property from which she draws a goodish income. John vehemently urges her ladyship to go to law with him, telling her at the same time of his own grievance, and arranges to pay half her lawyer's bill for her, she in return to use her influence to make Lady Lucre accept him. The case is a very long one, and Lord Scales, finding it very expensive, and that it is going against him, offers to compromise by giving up a good deal of his property to Lady Venetia and her toady, one Carrier, who was ruined by the late lord, and forced, by some rather sharp practice, to sell him his estate, and who is now with her in the case, as he wants to try and get it back again. Lady Venetia agrees, as the terms are very advantageous to her, and settles the matter, without saying a word about poor John. He is, of course, dreadfully cast down; but about this time Lord Scales finds that Lady Lucre's money is so closely tied up that he cannot make any use of it, gets tired of her, and throws her over; and the widow, left alone, and wanting a *beau*, gives John hopes, and finally engages herself to him, allows him to name a day, and treats him as her accepted lover. But just at this moment John's plans are disconcerted by the appearance of young Captain Leaningtower, Lady Lucre's cousin. His family had once been people of quality, and many of them had distinguished themselves in the naval service; but they had been brought down in the world by their free and liberal style of living, and, above all, by the result of the celebrated game at hazard which their head played some years back with the notorious gamester Admiral St George, on board the *Meloria*, in which the Leaningtowers lost almost all their fortune. Lady Lucre had been always rather attached to her cousin; they had when young been under the same guardian, an old military man, who kept them in very tight order, and bullied them most shockingly

till the young gentleman ran away and enlisted in the army, and the young lady eloped with her guardian's mortal enemy, Sir Castlerich. Young Leaningtower was dreadfully cut up at his cousin's marriage, for he has grown fonder of her than she deserves ; and hearing that she has become a widow, hopes some day to win her again. He has had no hope of cutting out Lord Scales, but is determined that old Florins shall not get her if he can help it. So he comes forward, greatly to John's disgust : his fine military bearing and the lady's old recollections give him a great advantage over his rival : she falls in love with him ; and one fine morning she gives John his *congé*, and marries her cousin. Here ends the story. How John stormed, dismissed some of his servants, swore at all of them ; how he brought an action against Lady Lucre for breach of promise ; how he intrusted the case to a very sharp lawyer, who was looked on rather shyly in the profession ; how this person (Walter Briny, whose character may be guessed by his nickname "the Greek") got him to intrust his affairs generally to his management, took bribes from Leaningtower to mismanage the case, and fleeced John till he brought him to the verge of ruin,—all this will appear in the sequel.

There is something, however, in these transactions to be noticed more important than their adaptability to the stage. I do not know any case in which the characters of the different Italian states are brought out and contrasted more strongly. We see distinctly set forward the Florentines, rich, good-natured, credulous, unwarlike, and perhaps a little purse-proud, zealous for liberty, but unskilled in the arts by which it is defended ; the Lombard tyrant, active, ambitious, crafty, faithless, but wanting in steady courage and perseverance ; the Venetians, politic and resolute, slow to advance, but rarely drawing back, clear to perceive and unflinching to promote the interests of their republic, and

thinking that their devotion to them sufficiently excused any disregard of their duties to others which they might seem to require ; and finally, the Pisans, long the victims of adverse fortune, beaten, impoverished, but full of martial ardour, and stanch to the backbone, and preferring rather to risk a desperate war than permit the growth of what seemed to imperil their independence.

The loss of Lucca was, as might be expected, deeply felt at Florence. Conscious of wealth equal to if not surpassing that of any other state in Europe, and of an intellectual pre-eminence which placed them at the head of the civilised world—conscious, too, of an internal rectitude of purpose which rendered them worthy of these advantages, and of a strength of determination which ought to enable them to wield them at will—her citizens thought themselves entitled to claim the first place in Italy, and perhaps looked forward to the day when Florence, triumphing over all her enemies, not so much by arms as by the general confidence in her justice, should exercise a primacy among the communities of the peninsula, counselling them in their difficulties, arbitrating between them in their quarrels, and gradually weaning back those which had submitted to tyrants to the principles of a well-ordered liberty, established in a confederacy of republics of which she should be the chief. I believe such an idea, if indeed it existed, was natural, and would not have been absurd : but whether it did or not, the Florentines had a very high opinion of themselves, and justly ; and they had been obliged to submit to a series of humiliations almost unparalleled in history. They had striven to win by money, where others had won by the sword : they had put their trust in allies, where others had leant upon their own strength : they had paid the purchase-money of Lucca twice, and twice borne the expense of war, from which their allies had reaped glory and advantage, and they themselves suffering, humiliation, and

defeat ; and, finally, they had been completely and disgracefully beaten in a single-handed contest with an antagonist out of all proportion weaker than themselves. Their shame and rage were unbounded : they sought for a victim upon which to wreak their vengeance ; and it was natural that the victim should be their own government. That the government was what it was, could not well be helped, and they might thank themselves for it. But a cry arose, that under cover of popular institutions an aristocracy had arisen, which monopolised the honours of government, without the excuse of being competent to fulfil its duties : that it was to their mismanagement that the late disasters were owing ; and that the only remedy for the evil was to establish a strong centralised government in the hands of one man, who should repress the insolence of the great, rest his authority upon the support of the people, and, strong in their confidence, make Florence again respected, and enable her to hold the place which was her due. We have heard something very like all this, not very long ago, in a country which ought to be more enlightened than Florence was at that period, and under circumstances far less provoking. Fortunately for that country, she confined her ideas to talking ; Florence carried them out in practice, and we shall see the result.

When the signory of the city was conferred, in the panic caused by Castruccio, upon the Duke of Calabria, that royal personage sent before him to herald his approach and hold the government till he should be able to come and take it up himself, Walter de Brienne, titular Duke of Athens. He was the descendant of a great French feudal house of ancient renown. One of its members had held the kingdom of Jerusalem, and, after giving it up, as the portion of his daughter, to her husband, the Emperor Frederick the Second, had been elected to the Empire of Constantinople, and had done much while he lived to arrest its recovery by the

Greeks. Another had been Count of Jaffa, had almost singly upheld the cause of the Christians against their own dissensions and Kharizmian invasion, and had ended his career by being murdered in a Moslem dungeon. Another had contrived by a fortunate marriage to secure to himself the possession of Athens, which, in the partition of the territories of the Greek Empire, had been scrambled for by the Crusaders, and had fallen to the family of De la Roche. Whether it was the same man, or a descendant, I do not know ; but a Brienne, Duke of Athens, fell in a battle on the classic shores of Lake Copais, with a horde of Spanish adventurers, half soldiers and whole robbers, who immediately took possession of the duchy for themselves ; and his son Walter, turned out of his inheritance, sought to restore his fortunes in the West, and entered the service of the King of Naples. It was thus that he came to hold the vicerojal function at Florence. His rule there had been just and moderate ; and the favourable impression which it created was enhanced by its contrast with that of the prince who succeeded him, whose military incompetence abroad, and shameless rapacity at home, made him generally detested. His name had been sometimes associated with the popular outcries against the government ; and it was probably in consequence of this that he took this opportunity to reappear in Florence. His arrival was hailed with delight by the people, who thought they had found in him the leader they wished for, and by the old nobility, who, ousted from their natural, and, as they thought, rightful supremacy, by Giano della Bella's " Ordinances," chafed at seeing the government in the hands of the chiefs of the commonalty, and saw in the establishment of monarchy a chance of restoration, or at least of vengeance. These two extreme classes, therefore, combined their forces against that which lay between them. So the almost insane pride and arrogance of the Roman Claudii often condescended to the

arts of the demagogue in order to stir up the passions of the mob against the liberal majority among their fellows ; so, in 1689, Balcarres and the Jacobites made a coalition with Montgomery and the ultra-Whigs of the Club ; and perhaps there may be found persons profane enough to find another illustration in the recent parliamentary history of the country above alluded to. The Florentine nobles, perhaps, deserve better than to be classed with these : but their course of action in this case was the same : by their union on this point with the lower classes, the Committee of Twenty, chosen among the "*Popolani Grandi* or *Grassi*," as they were called, which acted as the Ministry of War, was overthrown, and the Duke of Athens, captain of the armies of Florence, reigned in its stead. He speedily showed his sense of his obligations to the coalition which had raised him by gratifying the resentment of one of the parties and the envy of the other, with the execution of the commissioners who had conducted or misconducted the war, three magnates of the ruling class, one of whom was the ancestor of the great race of the Medici. Others of this order were subjected to banishment and confiscation ; and the Duke, emboldened by the favour with which these rigorous measures had been regarded, asked that his authority should be extended from the military command to the full *signoria*. Those citizens who still had their wits about them opposed this demand, and even seem to have appealed to the good feeling of the Duke ; but the latter knew his advantage, referred his demands to a full parliament of the people, and there, by unanimous acclaim, he was made Lord of Florence for life.

Of all the dangers to which Italian freedom had been exposed, this was by far the greatest. Great as had on former occasions been the odds against her, she had always found a rallying-point in this republic, which, while others fell away, stood stanchly by her, and by her own strength maintained her cause, often single-handed, until the storm

was past ; and now this citadel was in the hands of the enemy. When Florence was gone, it seemed as if all was over ; there was no hope from other quarters. Bologna had passed, after two years of stormy liberty, from the disguised tyranny of the Pope's Legate to the open tyranny of the Pepoli ; and Venice and Genoa, Siena and Perugia, hated each other much too cordially to be able to co-operate against any third party, and were with difficulty kept from flying at each other's throats. What made the case even more hopeless was, that it seemed as if Florence, having made up her mind to a tyranny, was determined to have a real one. No ideal of a beneficent government, resting on divine right, and shedding blessings around it—no warlike empire consoling its subjects for the loss of liberty by satiating them with military glory—was the *régime* of Walter de Brienne. He was one of that wretched race, the descendants of the barons of the Fourth Crusade, who had contrived to combine the vices of the barbarous nations from whom they sprang with those of the corrupted one with which they mingled, the latter far predominating ; and his government was, as might have been expected from such a man, invested with uncontrolled power over a body of wealthy citizens whom he thought he could despise. He was no lover of war, and, regardless of the fact that he was appointed to his present elevation in order that he might carry on hostilities with Pisa, he made peace with the enemy, giving up the point at issue ; and he did not even allow the city to have such advantage as might be expected from peace, however inglorious ; for he increased the taxes to a point at which they became intolerable ; and he encouraged disaffection in those towns which owned the rule of Florence in order to attach them to himself. Nor was this all. Although the French looked down with the most supreme contempt on their degenerate Levantine kinsmen, they were not above taking advantage

of their connection with them whenever anything was to be got by it ; and the news that a Brienne was master of the wealthiest city in Europe attracted crowds of them thither to share in the spoil. Relying on their support, the Duke of Athens showed less and less care to make his rule acceptable to those whom he governed, and in return he permitted them to indulge themselves in what excesses they pleased.

All Italy was astonished. Such misrule had never yet been seen, even in that land of petty despotisms. The rule of the Scalas, the Estes, the Visconti, and their brethren, had been, if not gentle, at least moderate, and, generally, not unjust, and even the worst of them had felt that there were limits beyond which they could not go ; and even the cruel Eccelino, the worst of all the tyrants whom Italy had yet known, had at least the advantage of being able to lead his subjects to victory, of keeping down all oppression save his own, and, above all, of being their countryman. He had been overthrown by the tyrant-ridden Lombards ; and now Florence—Florence, the guardian of liberty, so jealous of its purity that she would not endure the rule of her own nobles, that she would not admit the lawful supremacy of the best of the Emperors, that she flew to arms to check the faintest possibility of her being subjected to the gentle sway of the King of Bohemia,—Florence had placed herself, of her own accord, under the dominion of a gang of foreigners—a dominion cruel, bloody, extortionate, cowardly, inglorious. The misdeeds of the actual government were probably the least part of the evil, for they could be calculated upon and provided against to some extent ; but the insolence and licentiousness of the French adventurers were intolerable, and the foreign fashions which they introduced and paraded before the eyes of the citizens only seemed to them to add mockery to the deep injuries and mortal insults which they inflicted in other ways.

But the spirit of Florence was not extinct. The nobles, if they had at first sacrificed their patriotism to their resentment, were not disposed to see tamely their countrymen bowed under such a tyranny as this; and they began to draw towards their now vanquished opponents. Walter de Brienne perceived that he had lost his hold upon them; and, finding he could trust them no longer, took to persecuting them as he did their neighbours, and this, of course, completed their alienation. He still thought he was safe with the lower classes, whom he flattered in every possible way: but the more respectable among them, the small tradesmen, the artisans—those, in short, who belonged to a profession, or had anything to lose—were becoming disgusted, and the common suffering producing sympathy among all classes, the Florentines became what they had scarcely ever been before—a united people. A small minority of the aristocracy still held by the tyrant; six families are mentioned—two noble, and four *popolani*: they deserve to be recorded:—the Buondelmonti and the Cavalcanti, the Peruzzi, Antellesi, Buonaccorsi, and Acciaiuoli. But his main dependence was on his foreign mercenaries and the mob. We almost seem to be reading a piece of the history of the present century, and feel inclined to make use of the congenial terms of Codini, Lazzaroni, and Franco-Belges. Reliance on such auxiliaries succeeded then as it has done since.

What are now called the educated classes—the nobility, the mercantile order, and the better artisans—began to stir. Three separate conspiracies, comprising men of each rank—the Pazzi, the Bardi, the Donati, the Caviccioli, standing side by side with the Albizzi, the Magalotti, the Rucellai, and the Medici—were formed for the re-establishment of freedom. Walter de Brienne had now reached that stage when the exercise of uncontrolled power produces a kind of insanity: the idea that his authority could by any possibility

be in danger, seemed to him an insult ; and one officious friend who informed him of a plot against him was paid for his zeal by having his tongue cut out. His suspicions, however, were aroused, and he began to experience the miserable lot of tyrants, who feel themselves alone amidst a crowd of enemies ; and, determining to restrain others by inflicting upon them a portion of the terror which he suffered himself, he multiplied arrests and executions almost at random among the more prominent citizens, thereby, though without his knowledge, disconcerting more than one conspiracy. But it seemed to him that for one enemy whom he destroyed a multitude arose, and he resolved to strike a desperate blow. On the 25th of July 1343 he convoked an assembly of three hundred of the chief men of Florence—all those, in fact, in whom he could see a possible chief of revolution : the instant they appeared within the palace they were to be massacred ; and at the same time the mercenaries, reinforced by the troops of the Lombard tyrants, were to make themselves masters of the city and prevent an outbreak. But the design was discovered, or at least suspected : the citizens saw that no time was to be lost : none answered the summons to the Palazzo Vecchio ; and before the Duke had realised the idea of their contumacy, he was appalled by the news that the city was in arms. From every quarter of Florence the cry broke forth of Liberty, and Death to the Tyrant : the soldiery were surrounded by an ever-increasing multitude mad for revenge ; entangled in the narrow streets, overwhelmed by showers of stones from the houses, and unable to act together, they fell in crowds. About three hundred gained the great piazza, where, supported by those who held the palace, they turned to bay : but their enemies, gathering fresh energy from success, pressed round them ; and, after a short but fierce struggle, those who could not escape into the palace were forced to surrender. The Duke was by this time thoroughly cowed : the palace was strongly

fortified, and might have defied the assaults of a mob : but provisions were scanty, and what he had to expect in case of capture was pretty evident from the fate of one of his creatures, whom, with his son, a youth of seventeen years of age, he had given up to the people, and had seen them literally torn limb from limb before his eyes. So he surrendered to the bishop, one of the Acciaiuoli, who had atoned for the treason of his family by taking a prominent part in one of the conspiracies ; and, sheltered by him, patched up an agreement with the people by the intervention of the Sienese ambassadors, by the terms of which he gave up his authority, and was allowed to escape, not only with life, but also with the treasure which he had contrived to secure during his government, amounting to 400,000 florins.

But although poetical justice was not satisfied, and the great criminal escaped, not only unscathed, but laden with ill-gotten plunder, the Florentines might well forget their baffled vengeance in the joy of their deliverance. The ten months of tyranny—for it was no more—had taught them to appreciate the blessings of liberty, by giving them a personal experience of its opposite, and of union, by forcing the warring factions to sympathise with each other's suffering, and to learn that relief, if it ever came, must come for all, and be attained by the exertions of all. When the constitution was remodelled, the influence of these lessons appeared : the nobles, after fifty years' exclusion, were again admitted to the honours of the government ; the office of Gonfalonier of Justice, and the Companies of the People, institutions expressive of distrust and hatred towards that order, were abolished, and the lower classes, resuming confidence in their leaders, the *Popolani Grandi*, allowed them to monopolise as before that part of the government which was reserved for the commoners. A yet nobler instance of self-denial in the cause of freedom was afforded by the emancipated city. The communes, which, whether of their

own accord or by conquest, had submitted to the dominion of Florence, either stirred by the contagious influence of her revolution, or by the effect of the Duke's former intrigues among them, suddenly and simultaneously cast off her yoke, and declared themselves independent. The Florentines, to whom the name of liberty had now become very dear, were willing to look upon all who upheld it as their friends, and to pardon, and even to commend, anything done for it, even when it turned against themselves. The chief of these communes was the old and once famous republic of Arezzo ; and to Arezzo, accordingly, they sent orators, releasing that city from all ties of allegiance which Florence might suppose herself entitled to claim, and begging its citizens, if they would not obey her as subjects, that they would support her as friends and allies ; and a like renunciation, and a like request, was sent to all the rest. "This course, so prudently chosen, had a most happy end, because Arezzo, after not many years, returned under the dominion of the Florentines, and the other places reduced themselves to their former obedience within a few months. And thus," adds the philosophic writer from whom this is quoted, "oftentimes men obtain things more quickly, and with less danger and expense, by letting them go, than by pursuing them with the utmost force and obstinacy."

I shall close the second period of the Italian summer here. On looking back over the period through which we have passed, we shall see that liberty has five times been exposed to peril : four times the danger has come from without : twice from the monarchical influence of a chivalrous feudal sovereign : twice from the unscrupulous ambition of a rapacious Italian tyrant. The character of the enemy has been deteriorating each time, and his power increasing. John of Bohemia, far inferior to his father in moral elevation, and representing a less exalted principle, possesses a far wider dominion ; and it is an evil sign, that

while in the earlier struggle the monarchical cause rests mainly on the support of republics, in the later one the cause of freedom is forced to lean on the support of tyrants. Still more ominous is the change from Castruccio to Mastino. Castruccio was a formidable enemy; but he was only to be feared as an individual, and the danger ceased with his life. Mastino represented the growing tendency of the petty tyrannies to group themselves into aggressive empires; and this danger was one which was not affected by his defeat. The area, too, of freedom is being slowly contracted. Padua and Bologna, the two outposts which, at the conclusion of the last century, she retained in the hostile territory, have fallen; and tyranny has more than once passed the mountain-bulwark of the Apennines. Her old ramparts serve as such no longer. Lucca, if she again becomes free, will be so by accident: even Genoa, even Pisa, have tasted of the poisoned cup of tyranny, which, though nauseous at first, becomes sweeter with every draught; and the banners of the enchantress have been for a moment waved over the great stronghold itself. That moment constituted the fifth peril—the most critical of all, because it arose from within. And yet the lovers of liberty might cherish some hopes. Through all the vicissitudes of fortune, if strength had been growing on the one side, it had been growing also on the other. The wealth of Florence, secured by a constantly increasing commerce, and evinced by the gigantic operations to which it gave rise, was swelling every year: education and intelligence followed in its track, and grew with its growth. To her was conceded, though not without jealousy, the primacy among the free states, and the captaincy of the Guelf Confederacy; and thus was supplied to that body a means of organisation which it so much wanted. The aristocratical and democratical principles have made an alliance against the common enemy; and Venice, abandoning for the time her stately isolation, has entered

the field, and dealt to tyranny the hardest blow which she has yet sustained. But above all, the event of the fifth danger has begotten in Florence a truer love of freedom, and a more hearty hatred of despotism, than even she had known before : it has reconciled her factions : it has bound all ranks by the ties of mutual confidence : it has inspired her with a generosity and respect for the rights of others, rare indeed not only in the annals of Italy, but in those of the world. Here, then, let us stop for the present. Several years remain before the close of the half-century—several years before the commencement of the third period of the Italian summer : they will be filled by events, episodical, indeed, to the main thread of the story, but neither unimportant nor uninteresting. Ere long the fair promise of good at Florence will be grievously marred : the demon of faction will be again unchained : a furious civil war of classes, bloodier than any she has yet known, will be succeeded by a pestilence, the horrors of which, described over and over again, have lost none of their force by constant repetition : pestilence will again be succeeded by faction, and faction by revolution : the annals of the city are to be deformed for a long series of years by proscriptions, confiscations, and executions ; and in the midst of all the internal disturbance, tyranny, at this moment quiescent, will again rear her form, expanded to dimensions far vaster than of yore, more hideous in aspect, and more insidious in character, than when she tasked the utmost energies of the republic during the period we have just gone through. But before we are forced to look upon this spectacle, and while yet we can contemplate in Florence the ideal of what a constitutional state, upon whom has devolved the championship of freedom, ought to be, let us leave her for a while, and take a view of other parts of Italy—of Rome, of Naples, of Venice, and of Genoa.

CHAPTER VII.

*The Period of Summer—The Battle of Liberty against Tyranny
—Entr'acte the Second—Rome, Naples, Venice, and Genoa.*



DO not propose at present (if indeed at all) to go into the causes which made the fourteenth century so favourable to the growth of literature in Italy. It will be enough to say that it had, during the half-century which we have just finished, or nearly finished, made wonderful progress, and was producing important effects, socially and politically. We have already seen the results of the study of the Roman law in the narrow escape which the peninsula had from the re-establishment of the Empire ; and the success of that branch of ancient learning, which, with all its excellence, was somewhat dry and hard, and, though commanding admiration, could excite no enthusiasm out of the circle of the legal profession, renders it easy to be supposed what would be the influence of the great masterpieces of Latin poetry, oratory, and history. It is true that the history (for it is with this that I am principally concerned) was imperfectly understood—that the text had not been corrected by criticism, and that its principles were not appreciated : it was probably all the more admired on that very account. There had always been more or less of a superstitious veneration for the old Romans—somewhat like what there is at the

present day in the East for Cyrus and Nushirvan, Rustam and Alexander the Great ; and to minds imbued with this feeling, the introduction to their real history, or at any rate what passed for such at that time as it appeared in Livy, must have exercised a great fascination. How far Livy is really historical is a question which it does not concern me to enter upon. I have sometimes thought that a good deal in the modern interpretations of Roman history savours more of politics than of criticism, and reads more like the production of a pamphleteer than of an antiquarian ; and that a chronicle founded upon the ballads of early times, though assuredly not to be accepted without hesitation, deserves rather more respectful treatment than it generally meets with. I am glad to see that Ampère, no mean authority, permits one, though under strict limitations, to believe in the existence of Romulus. But, however this may be, it cannot be denied that the attractions of ancient history consist principally in those portions which are now regarded as fabulous. Even in the present age of criticism, the names of Brutus and the Fabii, Curtius and Camillus, are household words among us to an extent which no modern hero can hope to rival ; and much more was this the case among the highly imaginative southern people, to whom, when but recently emerged from barbarism, were almost suddenly revealed the annals of the great race from which they held themselves to be descended. The exploits of these heroes, their valour and their patriotism, were fully matched by numerous examples from contemporary history : but it would almost have seemed treason to say so : a halo, which perhaps did not justly belong to them, was cast over the times of classical antiquity ; and the Italians looked back with fond regrets to the happy days when their country was really great—when Venice did not exist—when Milan was a village of the Insubrian Gauls—when Florence was a collection of warehouses be-

longing to the merchants of Fæsulæ—when Southern Italy, split up into numberless petty divisions, was lacerated by perpetual civil war.

But however imaginary may have been the degeneracy of the Italians of the middle ages over the greater part of the peninsula, there was one point where it was very real ; and that point was Rome itself. As Rome of old was the highest, so now she was the lowest among the nations. The city whose soldiers had conquered the world could not defend herself against the spoliation of foreign brigands. The city which had gathered to itself all the civilisation of antiquity, was more than all others a barren spot in the midst of the revival. The city which had given birth to and fostered the expansion of law, till she had identified it with herself, was the place above all others where justice was most corrupt, and life and property most insecure. Perhaps this was not to be wondered at, for Rome had no government, or, which comes nearly to the same thing, it had three. It was a republic, under the sovereignty of the Pope, and the suzerainty of the empire. The first was real and legal : the last legal but not real : the second was a claim resting on no shadow of right, and for which the claimant in vain tried to create a basis of prescription. The Popes, at least for the last four or five centuries, had done Rome little good by their residence : they did, if possible, even less by their absenteeism. The principal result of their policy during that period (at least the latter part of it) had been to aggrandise certain great families, and they left those families as a legacy behind them. Amid such a magistracy and such a populace as Rome then possessed, it would have been strange if the nobles had set an example of virtue or obedience to law ; and they set very prominent examples of contempt for it. Of all the aristocracies of Italy (and none of them were blameless) the Roman was the worst. The faults of the others were to a great extent redeemed, in some cases more

than redeemed, by their good qualities. But the Romans (I speak of them as a class) can hardly be said to have had any. There was neither a Gradenigo nor a Giano della Bella, neither a Lamba Doria nor a Castruccio Castracani, to be found among them. Even of their military courage the most that can be said is, that they were not markedly deficient in it ; and of patriotism it may almost be said that they had no idea. In after times they produced several distinguished commanders who not only earned to themselves a great name in the civil wars of Italy, but were worthy to lead the armies of Spain and the Empire : but now they were little better than captains of banditti. At the head of gangs of Transalpine hirelings, they ravaged each other's estates, and burnt each other's houses ; and the different factions, agreeing in nothing else, agreed in despising and outraging the people. The unhappy citizens, incapable of the efforts to which far slighter injuries had aroused the Tuscans, saw their only chance of safety in attaching themselves to one or other of the great families. But this did them but little good ; for while one party made them pay dearly for a protection which was not very energetically bestowed, the fact of its acceptance made them a mark for the hostility of the other. Nor was there any hope of redress from the magistrates of the city ; for they, even if they did not, as they generally did, belong to the order of nobles, were either bribed or overawed by them ; and the people, though they were always cutting one another's throats for the names of Orsini and Colonna, could not summon up courage enough to enable their rulers to protect and enforce the laws.

It was about this time that a young Roman student conceived the idea of restoring his country to the position she had once held. A much less enthusiastic spirit than his would have been fired by the recollection of her ancient glory. A much calmer temper would have been inflamed

by her present degradation ; and he devoted the high gifts with which nature and study had endowed him, to realise this darling object. The story of Cola di Rienzi (for of course it is he of whom I speak) is so well known that it does not require that I should relate it ; and I gladly take advantage of this excuse for avoiding any detail upon a subject which, if I tried to treat it as it deserves to be treated, would expand this already swollen sketch to unmanageable dimensions.

Cola di Rienzi's character is one that has puzzled people a good deal. All, I think, have admitted that he was a learned man, as learning was then considered, and a sincere enthusiast. But some have supposed his enthusiasm to have been inspired by patriotism, some by ambition, some by vanity. As far as I have seen, it appears to me that the generality of writers rate his character and abilities too low. That a humble citizen (unless we believe the story of his descent from the Emperor Henry the Seventh) should, by the sheer power of eloquence, inspire a degenerate people with an ardour which reflected his own ; that he should infuse into them an energy to throw off the oppressive yoke under which they had so long passively crouched ; and that by their free suffrage he should be raised to a height from which he could look down upon the proudest of the Colonna ; all this would show him to have possessed genius, but not of necessity greatness. But he must have had no common strength of character, who, having been put forward as the representative of the vindictive passions of the people, passions which he had himself shared, could, upon the assumption of power, control them first in himself, and then in others, within the strict limits of justice : who, from the most unpractical education that could possibly be, in which the studies of a scholar were combined with the visions of an enthusiast, could bring to the tribunitian chair the highest qualities of a statesman : who could expel without blood-

shed the swarms of foreigners who had so long preyed upon the helplessness of Rome : who could force the nobles to respect the rights of the citizens, and control, if they could not forget, their mutual hostility ; and who, after securing, as by a miracle, safety for the highways, purity for the administration, and equity for the tribunals, could claim and obtain before Europe the pre-eminence that was due to the ancient mistress of the world. The forgiveness which he extended to the high-born conspirators who suborned an assassin to take away his life, merits a still higher praise, whether we ascribe it to policy or to magnanimity ; and if, carrying still further his imitation of the conduct of Augustus towards Cinna, he committed an error in trusting to the repentance of the offenders, and in investing them with high commands, it was the error of a generous mind, the disgrace of which rests entirely with those who proved so unworthy of his confidence. It could hardly be expected of him that he should possess the talents of a general : but he acquitted himself respectably in this capacity also ; and the victory of San Lorenzo, which he gained at the head of the raw militia of the city over the combined forces of the barons of the Campagna, supported by numbers of well-trained soldiers from beyond the Alps, reflects all the more credit upon him from the very unpromising character of his troops. Even his follies, such as his gorgeous style of living, the pompous ceremony of his knighthood, and the celebrated bath which he took on that occasion in the baptistery of Constantine, may be respectively set down to a desire to maintain before the world the prestige of the Roman government, and to a wild but not ignoble feeling that his position had in it something mysterious and divine, and should be connected by some outward sign with the traditions, half Imperial, half religious, of an elder day. Rienzi fell once, attacked by the nobles, whose treason he had pardoned, and whom he had loaded with honours and

employments; cursed by the Pope, whom he had revered, whose flock he had made happy, and whose revenues he had secured; and betrayed by the people, for whose sake he had sacrificed his repose and happiness, and hazarded his life. His indefatigable spirit did not yet despair. After years of suffering, of exile, imprisonment, persecution, and obloquy, he rose again, not as of yore the nominee of the people, but as ardent in his love for them as ever. Forced at once to meet the declared hostility of the nobles, and the dangerous intrigues of a bold and skilful adventurer who, at the head of the most powerful army in Italy, was plotting to supplant him in the sovereignty, he succeeded in foiling both by the detection, arrest, and execution of the latter, and the conquest of the strongholds of the former by means of the very army by which he himself was to have been overthrown. Had he been of the same mould as the tyrants of Northern Italy, this double victory would have insured him a long career of glory and dominion: but in spite of having been betrayed by them before, he still trusted the people, and disdained to secure his safety by the protection of German hirelings; and this confidence proved his ruin. Although delivered for the moment from all enemies, it was necessary that Rome should be defended by a military force: this force Rienzi, anticipating the plan of Machiavelli, a century and a half later, determined to raise among the citizens: but that degraded race would neither pay nor serve without being paid, and that largely; and Rienzi was forced to impose a new tax. Had the Romans possessed the spirit of patriots, they would have readily paid a far ampler sum than was demanded, to secure their honour and preserve their freedom: had they possessed the common sense of men of business, they would have seen that the permanence of order and good government would soon have restored it to them fourfold: but they had neither the one nor the other. The men who had seen

their brethren murdered and their houses plundered by the nobles without daring to strike a blow, rose in arms against the slight sacrifice which was demanded of them for their own advantage ; and Rienzi, too late recognising the unworthiness of the people whom, regardless of former warnings, he had fondly hoped to animate with his own spirit, and render deserving of the name of Romans, endeavoured to escape from a danger which he could not resist ; his flight was discovered and arrested ; and he was dragged to the foot of the Capitol stairs, and there was butchered by the daggers of those in whose service, and for whose sake, his life had for several years been one of ceaseless toil, danger, and suffering. It is too much the tendency of all ages, and perhaps of the present more than any, to judge of merit by success ; and tried by this test, Rienzi must be found wanting. But when it is considered what he attempted to do, and the materials he had to work with, the wonder is not that he failed, but that he did so much. It is generally the case that the halo which surrounds the name of a great man derives increased lustre from the darkness of the gloom which surrounds it ; but in Rienzi's case it has been rather obscured. Upon the principle that no good can come out of Nazareth, it has been customary to extend to him the contempt which so deservedly attaches to his countrymen ; yet his principal error was that which the Senate of ancient Rome considered a virtue sufficient to counterbalance the obstinacy by which Varro destroyed an army of 90,000 men, and brought his country to the verge of ruin, "that he did not despair of the republic ;" his justice, his patience, his self-abnegation, above all, his clemency, were qualities combined in him to a degree which it would have been vain to seek among any of the princes, and difficult to find even among the republican statesmen of Italy of that day ; and even now, when breathing a moral atmosphere, and formed by a political education, of which

the utmost that need be said is that they are the very antipodes of what fell to his lot, it would be a high praise to the great men who have guided and are guiding * the counsels of the peninsula in the present day, if it could be said of them that they had always exhibited the same scrupulous respect for justice, and the same high-spirited regard, not only for the welfare, but for the honour of their country, as distinguished Cola di Rienzi.

Amidst the numerous marks of the sense which Rienzi's contemporaries entertained of his justice, and of the height to which, in the eyes of Europe, he had raised the prestige of Rome, was the reference which was made to his arbitration of a serious dispute, the subject of which was nothing less than the crown of Naples. The death of the Duke of Calabria, which I have had occasion to mention, as one of the striking instances of that good fortune of Florence which so often relieved her from her embarrassments by the deaths of those from whom they arose, left the inheritance of that kingdom to his daughter Joanna, and upon her, when her grandfather Robert expired, the kingdom devolved. I shall take advantage of the same excuse which served me but now in the case of Rienzi, to pass over her story lightly ; and yet it is one upon which it might be excusable to dwell. Its interest is perhaps as great as that of the distinguished man of whom I have just spoken, though of a very different character.

Joanna has been well called the Mary Stuart of Italy. She resembled her to whom she is compared in her beauty, her accomplishments, her circumstances, her misfortunes, and, above all, in the doubt which enveloped, and still envelops, her character. With the view of keeping the crown of Naples in the possession of the house of Anjou, Robert had forced her at an early age to marry her cousin Andrew, a scion of that branch of his family which had

* This was written before the death of Cavour.

succeeded to the throne of Hungary. This union, in which the young princess's wishes had not been consulted, answered as unions of that kind often do. Joanna was lively and impulsive, and her naturally refined tastes and dispositions had been nurtured amid the graceful, though corrupting, influences of a polished and intellectual court : Andrew combined to the weakness of character which was blamed in Darnley, an almost savage brutality of manner, such as Darnley was never accused of, and which was better befitting the barbarous ancestors of the people among whom he was born, than the descendant of the Capets, and the ruler of an Italian kingdom. As might have been expected, aversion and contempt on the one side, and an angry jealousy on the other, soon ripened into intense personal hatred. Called to the throne shortly after their marriage, they displayed in that exalted position their feelings towards one another before all the world : Andrew behaved to his young Queen with gross brutality and cruelty ; and Joanna is accused of having listened with too much favour to the addresses of another of her cousins, Louis, Prince of Taranto. This state of things had continued for nearly three years, when Naples was appalled by the news that Andrew had been strangled by unknown hands in his own palace ; and the general voice accused Louis as the murderer, and the Queen as his accomplice. The marriage of the two supposed criminals, which, however, did not take place till two years afterwards, gave a fresh impulse to these suspicions ; and Louis, King of Hungary, the elder brother of the murdered man, determined to exact a full though tardy vengeance for his death. It was then that it was proposed to submit the case to the judgment of the Tribune of Rome ; and both parties consented to abide by his decision. It is said that Rienzi was in no hurry to pronounce a verdict which, whatever it was, might have the effect of exposing his but half-cemented government to the hostility of a victorious and implacable

enemy : but though this may possibly be true, the fall of his power took place too soon after the case had come before him to have allowed the utmost diligence on his part to investigate the matter fully ; and the fate of the kingdom was again left to be decided by the sword. Louis of Taranto, far superior to Bothwell as a courtier, was inferior to him as a soldier : the Neapolitans were probably no match for the Hungarians in the field, and besides only fought with half a heart ; and the King of Hungary had both the courage of a warrior and the experience of a general. He speedily overran the kingdom, the Queen's forces hardly venturing to make any head against him ; and the latter, finding it useless to maintain the contest any longer, retired to Provence, which had been in the possession of her family ever since the time of Charles of Anjou. Arrived there, she carried her complaints and her demand for justice before the footstool of Pope Clement the Sixth ; and in order to supply to him a fresh incitement to redress her wrongs, she surrendered to him the temporal lordship of the city where he resided, and which was a portion of the county of Provence. It is difficult not to connect with this cession, at least to some extent, the judgment which the Pope shortly afterwards delivered ; for that judgment was entirely in her favour : she was solemnly declared innocent of the crimes imputed to her ; her dethronement was pronounced unjust ; and she was taken under the protection of Holy Church, and restored to her sovereign rights.

Whatever may have been the effect which this decision produced on the general mind of Christendom, it was not calculated to produce much on that of the King of Hungary. His indignation, which burned all the more fiercely from having been so long suppressed, was founded on a deep conviction of his rival's guilt, and that conviction was not likely to be overturned by a verdict which he probably supposed to have been procured by bribery. His conduct

had been that of a stern executor of vengeance ; he had taken possession of the kingdom by force of arms ; he had executed unrelenting justice on those who were suspected of complicity in Andrew's murder,—one of them in particular, Philippa the Catanian, a lady of the court, who had exercised great influence over Joanna's mind, and whose name afterwards grew into a commonplace as an illustration of the vicissitudes of fortune, perished, together with her son and her daughter, under most horrible torments ; but the punishment of the chief criminals was beyond his power, and he had no wish to sully the purity of his cause by any appearance of personal ambition. The affairs, too, of his own kingdom required his presence. He had for some time been engaged in war with the Venetians ; and, just before his invasion of Naples, his troops had suffered from them a severe and humiliating defeat. He therefore made up his mind to submit to, without confessing the justice of, a verdict which he could not challenge without impugning the authority of the Church ; and, generously or indignantly refusing to accept a large sum of money which, by Clement's award, the Queen stood bound to pay to him, he signed a peace with her in 1351, and returned to his own country.

But misfortunes were gathering fast around the unhappy land. Some Genoese merchants, trading with the Tartars, had brought from the shores of the Euxine the seeds of a pestilence which was ravaging the East. On their way home they communicated it to the Sicilians ; and the great plague of 1348 began in Europe. The fearful visitant, which had swept away myriads of victims among the hardy nomads of the Russian and Assyrian deserts, revelled still more joyously among the denser populations and softer forms of Europe. It swept the Italian peninsula from end to end : with what looked more like the malignity of an evil being than the ordered course of a natural visitation, it

returned after an interval to devastate those places which it had passed unharmed at its first rush : neither the mountain wall nor the icy winds of the Alps sufficed to stay its progress ; and the fact that the small district of Brabant is mentioned as an exceptional instance of escape from the scourge, shows how widely and universally it must have raged. Its force was no weaker at the extremities than at the centre of its area ; for we are told that at Trapani, near the farthest point of Sicily, not one soul was left alive ; and so great was the mortality in the remote Northern Iceland, that the republic which had flourished there ceased to exist from want of men to carry on the government. It is needless to say that the havoc in Southern Italy was terrible. We are told that sixty thousand souls perished in the city of Naples alone ; and this loss, which, though I have not now any means of arriving at the exact census of that city, I think I should be considerably understating if I estimated it at half the population, will give a sort of idea of the general loss throughout the kingdom, which, in addition to the actual pestilence, was suffering through all its extent from all the miseries of civil war. The German and Hungarian followers of Louis spread themselves like a flock of locusts over the death-stricken land, plundering, destroying, burning, murdering : the disease, the horrors of which were aggravated by their ravages, did not spare, but neither did it check them ; their diminishing numbers were swelled by multitudes of those whom the presence of death had rendered reckless, or the spoliation of their property had rendered desperate ; and Southern Italy was fast relapsing into barbarism. Such was the scene which the land presented to the eyes of its Queen, when her treaty with the Hungarian permitted her to return to it, and to remount, with Louis of Taranto, her shattered throne.

Whether Joanna was guilty or not of the great crime

imputed to her must always be a doubt. In considering the question, Clement's absolution must be held to go for very little. Not only does it reflect suspicion upon a judge's impartiality if he allows himself to receive a favour from one of the parties in the cause which he tries, but also the value of his verdict is considerably diminished by the character of Clement, who was much prouder of being a French gentleman than of being head of the Church, and would naturally think it his duty not so much to weary himself with investigations such as were required by strict prosaic justice, as to protest against the foul aspersions which had been thrown upon the character of a lovely and persecuted queen ; and in redressing her wrongs, not to sully his character for gallantry by inquiring too closely whether they were such. Nor, on the other hand, can any importance be attached to the confessions which were wrung by torture from her supposed accomplices by Louis of Hungary's agents. I confess that, to myself, the case against her looks an ugly one ; and I am inclined to think in her case, as well as in the far better known and far more important one of Mary of Scotland, that if she had happened to be an ugly old woman, instead of a beautiful young one, she would have been given over very complacently to the Evil One by universal consent. Perhaps, however, there may be enough in her favour to enable us to follow Lord Stanhope's example in the case of her northern parallel, and, while finding her guilty of the charge of having, during her husband's life, indulged a passion for Louis of Taranto, to return, on the heavier count of murder, the Scotch verdict of Not Proven.

But whatever be the truth or falsehood of the great accusation by which the memory of Joanna must for ever be clouded, there can be no doubt that its dark shadow is not relieved by any light which might have been shed from her after actions, such as has sometimes redeemed the

character of far more cruel rulers, and far more abandoned women. The state of her kingdom when she returned to it was pitiable ; under her rule and that of Louis of Taranto, its condition became worse. The plague, indeed, gradually wore itself out, or departed to seek fresh pastures elsewhere : but the calamities produced by the passions or vices of men are always more terrible than those which result from the gravest visitations of nature ; and perhaps it is the worst part of the latter that they produce the effects which they do upon the minds of those among whom they appear. But the appalling wickedness that marks a season of pestilence, the utter lawlessness, and the unnatural selfishness, which would have probably died out soon after their cause had disappeared, were perpetuated by the ravages of the adventurers whom the Hungarian had brought with him, and whom he left behind, a bitter legacy to the wicked land which had witnessed, but not avenged, the murder of his brother. These bands, from having been soldiers, became robbers : from having been robbers they again became soldiers ; and in the transition they lost their character of followers of a prince, and assumed that of followers of their own pleasure : they organised themselves into companies and gave themselves chiefs ; and they roamed over Italy offering their services as mercenaries to the highest bidder, and plundering friends and foes with laudable impartiality. Nor were these Neapolitan desperadoes the only or even the worst part of the evil. The peace of Bretigni, which, shortly after this time, caused a transient cessation of arms between England and France by the humiliation of the latter, threw out of employment numbers of fighting men, who in the course of the war had contracted habits of licence and disorder, and who felt loth to return to the occupations of peace, which perhaps they had forgotten. To such men the distractions, the weakness, and the wealth of Italy opened a most delightful prospect of

combined amusement and enrichment ; and, accordingly, they flocked across the Alps in crowds. The Germans, who had long considered Italy their own especial hunting-ground, were not going to be left behind in such a race ; and thus, from every quarter of the horizon—England, Scotland, France, Provence, Gascony, Hungary, and all parts of Germany—the horizon was blackened by swarms of vultures hastening to share in the tempting feast. Among the armies of these adventurers who sprang into existence at this period, the most powerful and the most celebrated was called *par excellence* the *Great Company* : its character may be guessed at from that of its first leader, the Duke Werner, originally a follower of Louis of Hungary, who inscribed on his breastplate, and justified by his acts, the title of “enemy of God, of pity, and of mercy ;” and it was probably the best of them all ; for it aspired to be something higher than a gang of plunderers. With the strength and organisation, it gradually began to claim the position and exercise the reserve and self-restraint, of a great power ; and one of its leaders, Walter de Montreal, conceived, and nearly carried out, the idea of making it the stepping-stone and foundation of a great territorial empire. No part of the peninsula was free from the scourge. One powerful band, “the Company of St George,” nearly succeeded in making itself master of Milan ; another, the White Company of Hawkwood’s Englishmen, carried its devastations up to the very gates of Florence ; and the Great Company, after enabling Montreal to hold the balance for some time between Rienzi and the Roman barons, contrived to render both parties the instruments of his ambition, and would, but for the politic brain and the resolute spirit of the former, have invested their able and ambitious leader with the sovereignty of Rome. In all these cases, and countless others, the cities which had been marked out for spoil or conquest were saved as by fire : in

some cases they owed their deliverance to the resolution of their citizens, in others to the energy of their rulers : but neither of these safeguards existed at Naples. To seize the throne of that kingdom was an enterprise too great for any of the brigand chiefs ; and Louis and Joanna, secure from any immediate danger to their persons or their crown, loitered away their days amidst a profligate and voluptuous court, while their defenceless subjects were harried by the repeated invasions of the companies of adventure, and the more permanent and almost equally hideous ravages of undying civil war. Had Dante lived to see this day, he would have seen more terribly fulfilled than probably even he contemplated, the prophecy which he puts into the mouth of Robert's brother Charles, that the exclusion of his family from their lawful inheritance, the crown of Naples, would be paid for in lamentations and tears.

In strong contrast to the miserable condition of Southern Italy is the spectacle which at this moment is presented by Venice. To those to whom an aristocratical government is an abomination, the tranquillity of that republic will probably appear to be, as Hallam calls it, the "moral despair of servitude ;" while even those who are admirers of the Venetian system, or who more wisely think that no system of government can be described as good or bad *à priori*, and that what is of evil effect in one state may be beneficial in another, will be forced to acknowledge that few *régimes* have been propped up by such a multitude of crimes. But this must always be remembered, on the other side of the account, that the Venetian aristocracy, if they deprived their fellow-citizens of liberty, gave them such a government as for security had no parallel in Europe : that it increased their riches by encouraging commerce, and burdened them but slightly with taxation : that it preserved them from all despotism but its own by the firm attitude which it

ever assumed towards the encroachments of the Court of Rome; and that it succeeded in inspiring them, generation after generation, with such a deep feeling of reverence and attachment, that hardly any portion of modern history can show such instances of zealous devotion from the citizens to the state as can be found on almost every page of the annals of Venice. Happy, so it is said, is the nation whose history is uneventful; and, compared with that of the rest of the peninsula, this praise, if such it is, may be bestowed on that of this republic from 1300 to 1350. Such events as there are, I do not wish of course to detail: but I must mention one or two.

I have placed the date of the revolution which was carried through by Gradenigo at 1297 A.D., for the sake of clearness.* In point of fact, however, it lasted over a series of years in its operation. It was not the practice of the Venetians to legislate in a hurry; and in a delicate matter of this sort there was particular need for caution. The edifice of aristocratic supremacy was not completed till 1319, or perhaps 1325; and during the interval its progress was very nearly checked by a revolt. It shows how little the plebeians objected to a law which for ever excluded them from all share in the government, that this conspiracy, the only formidable attempt to frustrate it, was chiefly an aristocratic one. At its head were three great families, the Querini, the Badoari, and the Tiepoli; the *blueness* of their blood (to use a phrase which was as well known at Venice as in Spain) may be guessed from the fact that the Tiepoli, the *least* illustrious of the three, had been one of the twelve leading houses from whom had been selected the electors of the first of the doges more than six centuries before—that they had, during the thirteenth century, given two doges to the Republic—and that, had it not been for his own weakness or moderation, the present head of the

* “97” is an important year in the history of Venice: 697, 997, 1097, 1297, 1497, 1797, may all be taken as the dates of leading events in it.

family might have attained the same elevation ; and the inferior leaders belonged to ancient patrician houses, whose nobility dated from a period long anterior to the institution of the Grand Council, but which, never having happened to have given members to that body, found themselves hopelessly excluded from it by the terms of Gradenigo's enactment. The acuteness of the doge enabled him to discover, and his vigour and promptitude enabled him to defeat, the conspiracy. As is usually the case, its failure only strengthened the government it was intended to subvert. It is true that a law was afterwards passed to admit to the Grand Council those noble houses which had been excluded ; but this act of favour or justice was expressly framed so as to shut out for ever all those who had taken part in the attempt ; and though the Querini and Badoari* were destined often in after ages to supply their country with statesmen, soldiers, and diplomatists, yet they did not do so till the sentence of exclusion from power which was directed against their names was taken off by the extinction of the direct descendants of the chiefs of the conspiracy. But the principal effect was the institution of a commission for the investigation of the case and the detection of guilty parties. Its power was for ten days : at the conclusion of that period it was found expedient to renew it ; after several renewals it was continued for ten years ; and, finally, though the term of office for its members was fixed for one year only, it became one of the permanent institutions of the state. If ever any members of the above-named families sat (as doubtless they often did) in that body, they must either have rejoiced or groaned in spirit to think that the action of their own kith and kin had given occasion for the establishment of the Council of Ten.

Shortly after the commencement of the century, the Re-

* So were the Tiepoli, though in a lesser degree. Their names, however, do not stand so much on the surface of later Venetian history as those of the two others.

public was engaged in a second quarrel with the Holy See. On the occasion of a crusade, Clement the Fifth, the old enemy of Venice, issued a general prohibition against all commerce with the infidels, adding, that any breach of this edict should be punished by the confiscation, for the benefit of his own treasury, of a sum equal to the value of the exported goods. The Venetians—who, like the English of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and perhaps the Piedmontese of the present day, were individually a religious people, though zealous in defending themselves against the Pope's encroachments on their civil rights—were willing to pay the highest respect to the bull : but compliance would to many of them have been nothing short of ruin ; and they availed themselves of every possible excuse for evasion. But several of those who had ignored the Pope's commands during their lives became smitten with compunction at the point of death, when their confessors refused them the last sacraments unless they made full restitution. The accumulated values of all the cargoes which had been exported by an active merchant during a long term of years would be pretty sure to exceed many times over the sum which he possessed at the particular moment of his death ; but in those cases the Church was graciously pleased to be content with what he actually had, and to allow him to purchase absolution at the price of defrauding his relations out of their entire inheritance. But the heirs were not disposed to view the matter in the same light. The Papal commissioners were met with a distinct refusal to give them possession of the property which they claimed : the recusants, some of whom held high magistracy and office, cared little for the terrors of excommunication ; and they were stoutly supported by the government. The latter proceeded as usual with the utmost deliberation : it consulted the Venetian theologians, and having obtained from them a decision in favour of its own views, “took action,” to use Mr Gladstone's phrase, by

ordering the nuncios out of Venice. A long negotiation followed ; and at the end of two years, the Pope, John the Twenty-second, withdrew his censures, but without cancelling the bull, and cited the whole of the excommunicated persons, with the single exception of the doge, before his tribunal at Avignon to be judged. Of course nobody came ; and the Pope—who, to indemnify himself, I suppose, for his humiliation to the King of France, had plunged into a desperate quarrel, which reflected credit on neither party, with the Emperor of Germany—was not in a position to enforce his citation. Before the question was settled he died ; and his successor, Benedict the Twelfth, who appears to have looked at the matter less in an abstract than in a practical light, reflected that he was doing himself very little good by obstinacy, and wisely compounded for what he could get, by agreeing to allow Venetian merchants to commit the great sin, provided they procured and paid for his leave beforehand. As the revenue derived from this source in one year is mentioned at 9000 golden ducats, or nearly £3000 sterling, Benedict may be said to have done pretty well for himself : but the honour of the contest must rest on the whole with the Venetians ; and I have some pleasure in saying that the doge, by whom it was concluded, was no other than the very Francesco Dandolo who grovelled at the feet of Clement the Fifth in order to extort absolution for his country in the matter of Ferrara, and who appears on the present in a character more suitable both to the state which he represented and to the family whose name he bore.

There is but little else that need be mentioned in the history of Venice between 1300 and 1350. At home she was perfectly quiet ; and abroad, though occasionally troubled with colonial revolts and differences with other powers, which were rather squabbles than wars, she was pretty free, not only from danger, but also from apprehen-

sion. The Candiotas were rather difficult to keep down ; and the discontent of the Dalmatians was still more formidable, as an insurrection in that quarter was very likely to be the signal for a Hungarian war. The great victory which I alluded to above, as having been won over the latter power just before King Louis's invasion of Naples, was the result of a battle fought under the walls of Zara, which the Venetians were besieging and the Hungarians trying to relieve ; and the general to whom the credit of it was due was Marino Faliero, afterwards so celebrated for the conspiracy which Lord Byron has made the subject of a play. But the most important conflict in which the Republic was engaged during this period, was that which we have seen her wage against Mastino della Scala. I have pointed out its effect on the general history of Italy, and the great struggle between Hormouz and Ahri-man, liberty and tyranny ; but it also marks—faintly, it is true, but still it *does* mark—the introduction of a new element into the counsels of Venice. Hitherto the Flying Lion has looked exclusively to the East, and has spread his wings above the face of the waters : but now one foot is fixed upon the landward shores of Treviso, and his eyes must be more and more directed to the fortunes of Italy.

Nothing can be more opposed to the strict, though beneficent and not inglorious, absolutism of Venice, than the boisterous liberty of Genoa, teeming with life and energy. The dearth of events which makes the history of the former a comparatively easy task to narrate, is not to be complained of or rejoiced in here. The Genoese were always fighting : if they did not happen to have any foreign war on hand, their domestic factions always provided them with abundance of that sort of amusement. Their exuberant activity burst out in every direction, not indeed in the intellectual way, as I think I have before remarked, but in

every department of practical life. The Genoese merchants fully rivalled, under very much more unfavourable circumstances, their great competitors the Venetians and the Florentines : the Genoese soldiers shared with the Pisans the credit of being the most efficient in Italy, and were renowned beyond the Alps : the Genoese seamen not only made their flag dreaded all through the Mediterranean, but even carried it through the Straits of Gibraltar, and contended with the Flemings on the ocean. The immense advantages which the Venetians had gained by their share in the overthrow of the Greek Empire were compensated to the Genoese by the share which they had in its restoration ; and the aggrandisement of individual families in the foreign possessions which the state could not hold, which had been encouraged by the former as a matter of policy, was cheered on by the latter as a matter of national pride. The practice had begun long before ; and after the fall of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, it went on with increased vigour. The Serras and the Dorias held vast fiefs in Sardinia, where, indeed, the former had at one time enjoyed the royal title : the Pescatori became Counts of Malta, and even for a time wrested Candia from the Venetians : the Lomellini acquired possession of Tabarca, an island off the coast of Africa : the Zaccarias and the Giustiniani bore rule at Scio : the Cattanei won by the sword a wide dominion around the alum-mines of Phoea. Nor was this energy confined to the service of their country or the pursuit of war and sovereignty—the Genoese became equally distinguished in foreign kingdoms. About this very period, one Genoese, Raffaele Doria, was Admiral of Sicily : another, after gaining a great naval victory over the Moors, was invested with the same office in Castile : another commanded the fleet of the King of Cyprus in a crusade against the Turks : another, under Edward the Third of England, was Constable and Vice-Admiral of

Aquitaine ; a fifth became attached to the court of that monarch, gained there a high reputation, and was employed in several important embassies, one of which had for its object the reconciliation of a quarrel between Edward and the envoy's own countrymen. A very slight and superficial knowledge of contemporary history has shown me these facts, which I record more as a sample than as a catalogue of the offices and dignities held by these people at that time. But of all the glories of Genoa, unquestionably the greatest were her two colonies of Pera or Galata, opposite Constantinople, and Kaffa in the Crimea. I must say a few words about each of these ; and if I seem to scatter my threads rather wide by so doing, it is only with the view of drawing them all more closely together in the sequel.

In 1344 a quarrel took place at Tana, I think, in the Crimea, between a Genoese and a Tartar, which from words came to blows, and ended in the death of the latter. The great Khan of Kipzak, who had made himself master of the Crimea by violence, determined to revenge this insult ; and he ordered the colonists to evacuate Kaffa at once. His mandate was met with a positive refusal ; and Kaffa was at once attacked by a vast multitude of barbarians. Genoa was at this moment engaged in a war with the Spanish Moors, and no assistance could be looked for in that quarter : but the Kaffese did not ask for any : they trusted to their own unaided resources to bear them through a war with a potentate whose dominions were large, and, in the state of geographical knowledge at that day, probably seemed illimitable ; and they found them amply sufficient. The walls of Kaffa were rude ; but they were quite hard enough to break the skulls of the Tartars who rushed against them, and quite high enough to prevent people from getting over them without ladders. A blockade was tried : but that naturally had not much effect against a city which had the

command of the sea ; and the besieged, finding themselves secure, assumed the offensive. They closed all the ports of the Crimea, and stopped the Tartar commerce ; and from time to time they used gently to divert and advantage themselves at once by landing from their barks at different points on the coast, and enjoying a good pillage. It was almost cruelty to animals : it was like shooting at an elephant on a kraal, or like the Philistines teasing Samson when he was blind. The great Khan got beside himself with rage : but he was quite helpless ; and he was obliged to lower himself to sue for peace. The colonists were in no hurry to come to terms ; they rather liked being at war with him than not ; and they told him very quietly that it was no affair of theirs, and that if he wanted anything, he must apply to the "Great Commune," for so they called Genoa : that, for their part, they wished him success ; and that, if he liked, they would lend him the means of preferring his suit, by placing a couple of galleys at the service of his envoys. To Genoa accordingly the envoys went. The impression produced upon their minds by the prowess of the Genoese was deepened by the sight of the city from which they came, and which, even at that day, deserved her title "*la superba*." They were received in state ; and there, while they stared with their large mouths and their small eyes open, they were informed that the Great Commune would be graciously pleased to overlook their offence if they reimbursed the people of Kaffa for the expense they had been put to in punishing them. There was no help for it. The terms were accepted, and the descendant of Zingis had to swallow his mortification, and wait for a better opportunity for revenge.

The colony of Pera had been founded by the Genoese after the recapture of Constantinople. They would have preferred a settlement in the city itself, like the Pisans and Venetians ; but Michael Palæologus knew his allies

well enough to prefer contemplating them with an arm of the sea between them. The arrangement was so far a good one : but in the war between Genoa and Venice, at the close of the thirteenth century, a Venetian fleet passing through the Bosphorus took the opportunity to land and sack the place ; and the alarmed colonists implored the then Emperor to allow them to protect themselves from a repetition of the outrage by surrounding themselves with a wall. Whether through indignation against the Venetians, or from sheer blindness, the permission was given : the fortifications were erected ; and the Greeks too late discovered that their own act had given to a powerful and daring neighbour an arm which might any day be turned against themselves. The Genoese were not modest in prosperity. They felt themselves strong, and saw no reason why they should be ashamed of it ; and they exhibited it after a fashion very offensive, not to the pride of the Greeks, for they had none, but to their vanity, of which they have in all ages had a great deal. The weakness of their government, and the constant revolutions to which it was subject, prevented their disgust from taking any open expression ; but about the time of the “ Crimean war,” if we may so call it, a *coup d'état* at Constantinople transferred the Empire, which had previously been divided between the young heir of the Palæologi, and an aspiring rival, originally minister, John Cantacuzenus, to the sole power of the latter ; and the new Emperor set to work with vigour to reform abuses, and to restore the shattered power of his predecessors. His exertions were not without effect ; and the Perotes began to get anxious for their own peace. With the view of testing his intentions in regard to themselves, they asked leave to occupy some additional ground near their own intrenchments ; and on his refusal, they assumed that they would be attacked sooner or later, and declared war. Conceive the feelings of Constantine and

Justinian, conceive even the feelings of Enrico Dandolo ! The Perotes (for the mother city took no part in the contest) made themselves masters of the Golden Horn, and made a desperate and all but successful attempt to storm Constantinople. The Emperor was absent at the time that this daring assault was made. But on his return, he lost no time in doing his best to avenge the insult, by a combined attack on the offending suburb both by sea and land. The renovated navy of the Empire, after having blooded itself, and proved its valour by murdering the crew of a Genoese galley which fell into its power, advanced up the Golden Horn, while the army, supported by a large reinforcement of Turkish and Bulgarian allies, invested the place on the land side. But just as the former were about to commence their onslaught, they were seized with an unaccountable panic : some ships turned straight round, and others ran foul of one another : the men jumped overboard in crowds ; and all was in confusion. The terror communicated itself to the land army : they broke up from their camp, and Turks, Greeks, and Bulgarians took to their heels with laudable emulation, and never rested till they had placed the Sweet Waters between themselves and the terrible Italians, who were quietly plundering their camp, and not thinking of pursuing. To the credit of the Perotes be it said, that their attention was in addition occupied by a more generous task : they were seized with pity for the unfortunate wretches who were struggling in the water, and calling to them not to be afraid, sent out their boats and saved numbers of them from drowning. There is something very English about the old Genoese character, at once chivalrous and schoolboyish. I should rather like to have seen the two nations brought into close contact fairly with each other. They did, in fact, meet in arms twice—once on the field of Cressy, and once before the walls of Chiozza ; and I attribute the result of these two trials of strength less

to the inferiority of the Genoese than to the fact that, in the former instance, *they* were commanded by Philip of Valois ; and that, in the latter, the English were commanded by Carlo Zeno.

The result of this double defeat, which may partly be attributed to the inexperience of the seamen and the indiscipline of the troops, and partly to the effect produced by the Perote cannon—an invention not known before in these parts—caused the Emperor to beg, or, as he would probably have said, to grant a cessation of hostilities. The terms of it obliged Cantacuzenus to surrender the ground which the Perotes had asked for ; and though the cession was so managed as to hurt his pride as little as possible, not all the flatterers who hung about his palace could make out that he had come out of the war with credit. He had as little cause to love the metropolis as the colony. Some little time previously the then Emperor had taken advantage of the weakness or minority of the chiefs of the Zaccarias and Cattanei, lords respectively of Scio and Phocæa, to get possession of their states. The Genoese were indignant at these cowardly procedures, particularly as the two families had often furnished the state with distinguished servants, and the latter especially had, a short time before, held their ground alone and successfully against the combined forces of the Greeks and Turks : but they could not do anything at the time. It so happened, however, shortly after the “Crimean war,” that a body of exiled Genoese nobles made themselves so exceedingly troublesome to their countrymen that it was found necessary to have recourse to extraordinary exertions to put them down. The public treasury was empty ; and commissioners were named to get up a good fleet by means of private loans. I mention this fact chiefly because one of these commissioners was named Garibaldi. It is curious to find one of that name collecting funds and organising a fleet at Genoa by private assistance,

for a great public object, more than five hundred years ago. Well, by the time the fleet had got to sea they found there was nobody to fight. The nobles thought that it would be more satisfactory to fight the English at the expense of the King of France, than to fight their countrymen at their own : and having, perhaps, some objection to waging a desperate war against men of their own blood, they took the shilling from Philip of Valois, and went off to France in a body, leaving their fortresses behind them undefended. Perhaps the Genoese did not think it fair to attempt to take them, now they were deserted ; at any rate, it does not seem to have occurred to them to try ; but it was a pity to take home such a fine fleet as they had without doing something with it. Whether they referred the question to headquarters, or simply assembled a naval parliament and put the question to the seamen, I do not know : the former was undoubtedly the proper course—the latter more in accordance with Genoese practice ; but the result was, that they decided to go eastward and have a fling at the Greeks. It would be too long to say anything about the proceedings of Garibaldi's fleet (for so I choose to call it, though the admiral's name was Vignoso) beyond the fact that it was entirely successful. The Zaccaria and Cattaneo dominions were recovered : the citizens who had advanced money for the fleet were amply repaid ; and the republic had the double satisfaction of punishing the Greeks and obtaining possessions in the Archipelago, which might balance those of the Venetians. Cantacuzenus was not sole Emperor when this took place. It reflected no disgrace on him, and, in fact, was one of the causes which facilitated his usurpation : but instead of feeling grateful to the Genoese for their involuntary assistance, he regarded them as insolent interlopers ; and this foray of theirs, together with the Perote war, constituted a pretty large score against them, to be wiped off at some future day.

In order to take up the next thread of this story, I must go back some twenty-five years, to the period of the invasion, by the forces of the King of Aragon, of the island of Sardinia. After the fatal battle of Meloria, the Pisans had been forced to give up to their rivals the possession of the western half of that island; and as the King claimed the whole of it, his attack was as much directed against one republic as the other. Genoa was not at that moment able to do much for its defence; for the invasion took place just in the thick of the war against the confederacy of the Lombard Ghibellines, the King of Sicily, Castruccio Castracani, and her own exiles, and she was closely invested by land, and nearly so by sea. The Serras, Dorias, and other Genoese settlers in the island had therefore to take care of themselves. The broken power of Pisa had been showing some symptoms of revival: it had seemed not impossible that she might attempt to recover her lost dominion; and as she had lately organised a system of direct government in the part which she still possessed, by breaking down the power of the great feudatories, and supplying their places with her own officers, the Genoese settlers, seeing the powerlessness of their own country, and thinking that it was a choice between her rule and that of Aragon, made up their minds to acknowledge the latter, of course on their own terms. The conditions were agreed upon without difficulty by the King: but after his victory over the Pisans, he began to contrast the extent of his power in the two divisions of the island, and to aim at its entire subjugation. The expulsion, in 1327, of all the Italians from the town of Sassari, in order to repeople it with Spaniards, showed his intention. The Genoese, as has been sufficiently shown, were not a people who cared to wait to be attacked: the Dorias sprang to arms: the Serras followed their example; and the republic, which had now got rid of Marco Visconti and his Ghibellines, supported them vigorously. The Aragonese were

unfortunate in their general, who was the same Cardona who afterwards, as we have seen, mismanaged the military affairs of the Florentines. The Genoese, victorious both in the Ligurian and Spanish seas, landed on the island, and pursued their career of victory on shore. The King at last was obliged to confess himself beaten. He attempted to divide his enemies by heaping favours on the Serras; but though he succeeded in bribing them to be quiet, the peace which was shortly afterwards concluded, A.D. 1336, by the Pope's intervention, showed sufficiently which had had the best of the war; for he had to give up all claims to the sovereignty of Corsica, to which he had the same pretensions as to Sardinia, and to consent that the Genoese in the latter island should be governed by their own laws. Naturally, therefore, he did not love the republic, and was on the look-out for an occasion to punish her for his humiliation, and to put down his over-powerful Sardinian vassals, whose independence was a constant offence to the dignity of his crown.

The internal history of Genoa during this period can be more briefly skimmed. During the great war they had strengthened themselves by giving their *signoria* to Robert of Naples; but they had no intention of sacrificing their liberty by so doing; and finding, soon after the peace with Aragon, that his rule was getting oppressive, they rose against it, turned his lieutenant out, and organised the republic. The change had the effect of driving out the Guelfs, and bringing back the Dorias and Spinolas; and so wise and popular was their rule this time, that, after the expiry of their year of office, it was confirmed to them for three. But before the time was up, another revolution took place. A quarrel had arisen between the officers and men of a Genoese force in the French service; and when the latter appealed to the King, he would not listen to them, and only threw their leader into prison. His comrades,

indignant at the harshness, if not injustice, of this treatment (for I am ignorant which side was in the right), mutinied in a body, and then separating themselves into small detachments, made their way across France, as best they could, back to Genoa, which, upon their return, rang with their furious complaints and loud denunciations of the tyranny of kings and nobles. The popular mind was deeply stirred, not only against the French Government, but against their own. A loud cry was raised for the restoration of the right of electing the "*Abate del popolo*"—an officer whose business it had been to watch over the interests of the people, but whose appointment had been lately given over, as a mark of confidence, to the government. The demand was acceded to, perhaps reluctantly: but before the reply was known, the mob, which was waiting outside the palace, began to grow impatient. While they seemed almost on the point of an outbreak, a man came forward, sprang on a bench, and shouted the name of "*Simon Boccanegra*." The cry was taken up, and Boccanegra was called to the front and invested with the office. But Boccanegra, though the favourite of the people, was a noble, and had a full share of the pride of his class. The functions of the *Abate* had never been exercised by any but plebeians; and he flatly refused to soil his dignity by accepting it. A Babel of sounds arose. None seemed to find fault with Boccanegra's fastidiousness. The sole thought of the multitude seemed to be to get him on any terms. Different titles were named which might be worthy of him. Some voices uttered the word "*Signore*." Genoa was trembling on the verge of a tyranny; and a tyranny she would have become, had not some one at that moment shouted out "*Doge!*" Those who had been rather chilled and alarmed at the ominous sound of the former word took up the cry with enthusiasm. Boccanegra was carried, nothing loth this time, to the palace. The captains of Doria and Spinola blood and

their partisans were driven out with threats and clamours ; and the popular nominee, amidst the pealing of bells and loud and continuous cheering, which echoed, we are told, far into the neighbouring valleys, was invested with the insignia of sovereignty, received the archbishop's blessing, and was seated on the throne as first Doge of Genoa. This commencement did not look very promising. But the choice was in itself not a bad one. Boccanegra's fault was one which might have been expected rather from the circumstances than from the method of his election. He was haughty, unbending, and severe : his reign was useful and glorious : nobles and people were alike kept down by him ; and his life was destined to be a striking example of the instability of popular favour. Menaced by a general revolt soon after his accession, he calmly and contemptuously laid down his office, and departed, like Sylla, unharmed amidst the throng of his enemies. He was summoned again to assume the ducal crown in an hour of darkness and peril : but neither his talents nor his services could save him from ingratitude ; and, amid the pangs of a mortal sickness, his last moments were hastened by the shouts which hailed the accession of a victorious rival. The way in which his first inauguration was conducted held out small hope of permanent peace. The nobles resented their exclusion from power ; and from Boccanegra's accession to the end of this half-century, it may be said that those of the Guelf party were always, and those of the Ghibelline party generally, in exile. Adversity generally reconciled them, and their reconciliation implied combined war against their country. Genoa had, from 1300 to 1350, numerous and pretty severe wars against Turks and Tartars, Greeks, Spaniards and Moors, Flemings and English, Neapolitans, Lombards, Sicilians, and Venetians ; but her worst foes were they of her own household.

I have mentioned the Venetians among the enemies of Genoa ; but though they were the people from whom, more

than all others, hostility might be expected from the constant conflict of their interests, and to be dreaded from their power, their wisdom, and their pertinacity, the two states had contrived to avoid a real war since the battle of Curzola. They had often shown their teeth and scowled, and sometimes snapped at each other ; but the Genoese had been too busy, and the Venetians too prudent, to let it go far. A slight amount of blood-letting, to satisfy the pugnacity of both parties, was always followed by an accommodation which rather postponed than removed the causes of quarrel ; and, on, one occasion, they carried their mutual civility so far that they allowed their flags to float side by side in a crusade against the Turks, and to be displayed in common triumph from the citadel of Smyrna. Still they did not love each other ; and Venice watched with malignant joy the ripening harvest of hatred which sprang from the humiliation which her proud and careless rival had inflicted on so many powerful sovereigns.

Such, in 1344, was the state of affairs between these two powers, when the Khan of Kipzak thought that he had found a chance of avenging himself for the beating he had had from the Genoese of Kaffa five years before. Great numbers of citizens of the offending nation were assembled at Tana, the chief port of the Crimea, expecting the arrival of a great caravan from the East, when the Tartars were let loose upon them. Many were massacred, and those who escaped with life were chained and imprisoned ; their goods were all seized ; and the barbarian rejoiced that he had not only wiped away the stain on his honour, but also made a very pretty addition to his not very large treasury. His triumph was short. The Genoese—though still suffering from the plague, which, in their city alone, had swept away 40,000 citizens—armed a fleet, and sent it to the Black Sea. On their arrival they found that the Khan had been already brought to his knees by the colonists of Kaffa alone, and all that remained for them to do was to assist their kinsmen

in enforcing the terms of the peace, by which every port in the Tartar dominions was closed to all foreigners, and the whole commerce of the country was to be transferred to Kaffa. It was evident that such a treaty was only meant to be kept till it was safe to break it; and the Genoese, foreseeing this, found it expedient to purchase the acquiescence of the Pisans and Venetians, whose interests it might seem to injure, by a liberal concession to them of privileges and freedom of entry to the favoured port. With these, however, the latter soon ceased to be content. Some galleys belonging to Venetian merchants made an attempt to break the blockade of the Sea of Azoff, and reopen the Tartar trade. The offending ships were pursued and captured: both parties referred home; and both parties were supported by their own governments. The question might have been easily arranged, and all the more so that, while the ravages of the pestilence and the enticements of the Roman jubilee had thinned the population of both states alike, Venice was still suffering from the effects of the Hungarian war, and the flower of the Genoese Riviera had followed Antonio Doria and Carlo Grimaldi to France. But the passions on each side were too violently aroused: the growing jealousy of fifty years, the long recollection of mutual injuries and mutual insults, silenced all the dictates of reason or prudence; and the embassies which they sent to each other bore less the character of messages of peace than of cartels of defiance. The scattered threads of the foreign relations of Genoa are being drawn together around a strong central strand; and, while Aragon and Constantinople look forward to the speedy arrival of their day of vengeance, the two giants of the sea stand facing each other, armed to the teeth, with hand on hilt, and eyes inflamed with hatred. The horrid din of their conflict will soon be heard even amid the uproar of Italian politics; but it will be more convenient to view it in connection with those politics: and to them accordingly, let us turn.

CHAPTER VIII.

*The Period of Summer—The Battle of Liberty against Tyranny
—Third Half-Century—Concentration of the Struggle—
Giovanni Visconti.*



URING the half century which we have just concluded, we have seen the tyrannical principle conduct its operations for the demolition of liberty on the Cossack principle of warfare, —striking a series of blows in rapid succession, first on one point, then on another ; now bringing forward the heavy artillery of Imperial prestige, now the imposing order of a beneficent absolutism, now the light cavalry of military success ; at one time breaking out in Central Lombardy, at another in Verona, at another in Lucca ; constantly beaten back, and yet constantly advancing, and making each defeat the basis of a new attack. We have seen the result of these tactics in the complete and hopeless subjugation of Æmilia and Lombardy, where the power of resistance was feeble : but the great mass of the armies of freedom remains unbroken. But from this time forward to the end of the century the enemy adopts a new plan of action. Instead of constantly shifting his ground, he concentrates his forces around a single well-chosen base of operations ; and instead of intrusting their command to a succession of leaders, unconnected with each other save by general sympathy as Ghibellines, and often divided by mutual hostility, he raises up as his lieu-

tenants a single family, in whom the qualities which properly belong to a tyrant seem to have been transmitted as a heritable property from generation to generation, and to whom, for a combination of ability and wickedness, no parallel, so far as I know, is to be found in history.

The name of Visconti is not new to us. It first made its appearance at Milan towards the close of the thirteenth century ; and all through the first half of the fourteenth it has played a more or less prominent part. The family which bore it has attained great prosperity, and been tried by great reverses : they have acquired the lordship of the great city of Milan, and been driven forth from it as landless exiles : they have recovered their old dominion, and the greater part of Central Lombardy along with it, only to experience, by a more cruel fall, the folly of placing any reliance on the honour or the gratitude of Louis the Bavarian ; and, finally, we have seen Azzo Visconti, even after the last mentioned blow, not only restore the prestige of his house at Milan, but go forth from it to conquer his share of the collapsing dominions of John of Bohemia. But although always formidable from their characters, their constant ill-luck has hitherto prevented them from acquiring the influence which might have been considered as proper to them ; and their position as leaders of the Ghibelline party has been subordinate to that of the Scalas. Perhaps this was due in great part to the extraordinary abilities of the earlier chiefs of the latter family : but their pre-eminence had not in it the elements of durability ; and it must even at that time have been evident that, apart from all consideration of the qualities of their rulers, it could only be very fortuitous circumstances that could give to Verona even a temporary superiority over Milan.

Azzo Visconti has been called virtuous—virtuous, that is, I suppose, for a Visconti ; for, taking an abstract view of that quality, he could hardly be said to possess much of

it who could procure the assassination of his own uncle. However, he seems to have been entitled to the praise of a good ruler ; and his merits in that respect were rewarded by the acquisition of a wider, as well as a more complete, sovereignty than ever belonged to his fathers. He seized Cremona amid the wreck of John of Bohemia's empire, and wrested Brescia and Bergamo from the failing grasp of Mastino della Scala : other cities were induced, by fair means or foul, to confer upon him their sovereignty ; and at his death his dominions included the whole plain of Central Lombardy, from the Mincio to the Sesia. The character, too, of his power had changed : his predecessors, whether La Torres or Visconti, had claimed to be no more than chief officers of the republic of Milan : Azzo affected to exercise a more direct authority by hereditary right ; and instead of setting, as they had done, the seal of the city on public documents, began to make use of his own. The cognizance which it bore, and which soon became ominously familiar to all Italy, looks almost as if it had been devised by a Florentine or Genoese republican as a warning to his countrymen against the dangerous ambition of this family : it represented a crowned viper devouring a child. No juster symbol could have been devised for the character and the history of the Visconti.

Azzo had neither son nor brother to succeed him ; and when he died, his uncle Luchino claimed, as of right, to take his place as lord of Milan ; and his claim appears to have been uncontested. The new ruler did not even possess the very moderate amount of good in him that had sufficed to bolster up the reputation and secure the popularity of his nephew. He was of a stern and morose disposition, yet of dissolute habits and uncontrolled passions ; and the wealthier classes of his capital had abundance of cause to suffer from both sides of his character ; but he had the good sense not to push his tyranny too far. He possessed

the family character in full perfection ; an able administrator, a good soldier, and a crafty and unscrupulous politician, he succeeded in riveting more firmly the chains which bound his inherited domains, and in extending them by large additions. His restless ambition made him the terror of his neighbours : he made himself master of almost all the plain of Piedmont : he conquered Parma from the Marquis of Este : he formed for himself a powerful faction among the inhabitants of Genoa ; and he waged against the Pisans a war for the possession of Lucca, which, though it failed in its object, enabled him to extort from his warlike enemies the sum of one hundred thousand florins as the price of peace. Before his death he became the most powerful prince in Italy, and, after the King of France, the wealthiest in Europe.

Luchino died in 1349, and was succeeded, as a matter of course, by his brother, Giovanni Visconti, archbishop of Milan. He was a man of milder character than Luchino, but not less able and not less ambitious. The career of conquest which had prospered under those who went before him went on not less vigorously in his time ; and if his acquisitions were not so numerous as theirs, it was because he flew at higher game. His profession as a churchman not only did not hamper his schemes, but was even made use of by him for their furtherance : he brought his crosier to support his sword ; and perhaps was encouraged by its possession to push his armies into the so-called States of the Church, and bring himself into direct collision with the Pope. The success of Bertrand de Poiet in Romagna, temporary though it was, encouraged Clement the Sixth to repeat the enterprise of recovering, as he would have said, the possession of Romagna ; and a relative of his, Hector de Durfort by name, was sent by him with a full purse and apostolic benedictions, to see what could be done with that object. The internal broils and jealousies of the rulers of

that district enabled him to secure the assistance of one half of them in his attacks on the other half. But he was in too great a hurry for this policy of dividing his enemies to have a fair chance ; and while engaged in an expedition against the lord of Faenza, he could not resist the temptation of seizing upon the person of the most powerful of his own supporters, Giovanni de' Pepoli, who was actually in his camp as an ally. Treachery was not a thing which excited much moral reprobation in Romagna : but apart from the right or wrong of this transaction, it was a very stupid one ; for the Bolognese stood by Giovanni's brother ; and when Durfort, abandoning his enterprise against Faenza, laid siege to their city, the Papal troops, clamorous for their arrears of pay, mutinied, rescued the hostage, and allowed him to be ransomed. At this point Florence offered her mediation : strong ties of sympathy of old standing, bound her to Bologna : she was an ally of the Pepoli ; and, as a Guelf state, she was not disinclined to uphold the pretensions of the Pope. She was, therefore, anxious to satisfy all parties as far as possible ; and with this view proposed that the Pepoli should abdicate with an indemnity, and that the old republic should be restored under the recognised supremacy of the Church. This project, which, had it been carried out, would have reclaimed one of the strongest bulwarks of freedom from the dominion of tyranny, and given the Popes a better position in Italy than they had since the days of Innocent the Fourth, was frustrated by the fickleness of Durfort ; and the Pepoli, thinking that they had done enough for patriotism, and that they were now justified in taking care of themselves, made a bargain with the Archbishop of Milan, who had all this time been working underhand and aggravating the strife, and who now reaped the fruit of his intrigues by becoming lord of Bologna. This took place in 1350 ; and this acquisition by the renovated army of tyranny of the great Æmilian

republic, is a most appropriate opening for the intenser conflict of the two principles which is to characterise this half-century.

We left Florence in 1343 in a state of unwonted peace and prosperity. By her revolution against the rule of the Duke of Athens she not only rid herself of a tyrant, but learned the blessings of internal union ; and the further movement which turned Arezzo, Pistoia, and her other dependencies from subjects into allies, if it curtailed the extent of her territory, more than made up for the loss by the addition which it made to her moral influence. This state of things, however, was too good to last long. The nobles were absolutely incorrigible. Instead of endeavouring to prove by their conduct how undeserved had been their exclusion from power, they set themselves to work to justify it. Conscious of having rendered a great service to their country in contributing so largely to her recent liberation, they had expected to be rewarded by a larger share in the government than was accorded to them ; and their disappointment vented itself in faction at the council board and turbulence out of doors. The old times of Giano della Bella seemed to be brought back again : the pride and insolence of the nobles became unbearable ; and the citizens were not long in applying a remedy. A sedition broke forth among the people, headed, as of yore, by some patriotic members of the obnoxious class. The Palazzo Vecchio was closely besieged, and the utmost which the plebeian Priori could do to allay the storm was to procure permission for their noble colleagues to retire to their homes unhurt ; and the victorious party proceeded to remodel the constitution upon an exclusively popular basis. But things had gone too far to be settled by enactments. The aristocracy, though defeated for the moment, had still abundance of resources and abundance of spirit : they fortified their palaces and gathered in their dependents from their

fiefs beyond the walls. The government, on the other hand, enrolled the militia of the city, and called for help upon its allies of Perugia and Siena; and both parties resolved to appeal to the sword. A brief but bloody struggle crushed the Florentine nobles, and crushed them for ever: their palaces, bravely defended, were forced in succession; and when the constitution was again recast, in the classes into which the nation was divided, this powerful and illustrious order was not even mentioned. Here and there, in the later history of Florence, the names of the old nobles recur: but it is only in those cases where special favour has *elevated* them to the rank of plebeians; * and it is the great mercantile families, the Popolani Grandi, who henceforth direct the fortunes of the Republic. This new revolution, though not so honourable as that which drove out Walter de Brienne, led, like it, and like it only for a time, to good and happy results: all ranks of the plebeians were united: the insolence of the rich was abated, and the jealousy of the poor quieted; and the latter being admitted to a fair share in the government, a historian was shortly afterwards enabled to wind up his description of the constitution by saying that "concord follows in the city between the great and the small and the intermediate—each honoured according to his rank and according to his worth, and from this proceeds a melody so sweet that it is heard in heaven, and moves the saints to love this city and defend her from any that wish to disturb a state so tranquil and so serene."

It is impossible to say what the saints may have been *moved* to do for Florence; but they certainly appear to have *acted* in a manner indicating anything but love for her at this moment. For two years in succession, in 1345

* I must except the government of the society or institution called the Parte Guelfa, in which the nobles still retained a share. We shall hear more of this hereafter.

and 1346, the country was visited with a constant deluge of rain ; the Arno rose far above its banks, and swept away a large portion of the city : but this was not the worst or near it ; for the harvest in both years completely failed ; and there was a terrible famine. The government did its best to procure corn from abroad, but in vain ; for all provisions were intercepted by the famishing Pisans ; and the wealth of the great city was as useless to her as the gold of Robinson Crusoe. The sort of "melody" that must have issued from the starving citizens amidst the wrecks of their inundated houses may be conceived from the fact that, in 1347, 94,000 persons were daily fed from the public ovens : but the worst was not yet ; for upon their enfeebled and emaciated bodies there fell like a tornado the great plague of 1348. The recollection of that plague is associated almost entirely with Florence, as that during the Peloponnesian war is associated with Athens, on account of her having produced the historian by whom it has been described : yet the actual force of the stroke was perhaps more bitterly felt elsewhere ; and Pisa and Siena might envy her lot in not losing more than three-fifths of her population. It is difficult to conceive to their full extent the accumulated horrors of those four years.

Perhaps the plague contributed as much as any other cause to the formidable growth of the Viscontine power ; for their capital, Milan, got off with comparative impunity, and they were thereby enabled to take advantage of the weakness of their less fortunate neighbours. Florence was happy in not being brought into collision with them during her great agony ; she had looked on with grim complacency at the desperate struggle which the Pisans waged with Luchino while the famine was upon them ; and perhaps she did not realise that their hardly-won victory was an escape for her as well as for themselves. But the cessation of the plague allowed her to turn her attention abroad : with re-

turning health, strength, and confidence revived ; and she again assumed the privilege and duty of the protectress of Italian freedom. We have seen how she endeavoured to rekindle the republican sentiment in the people of Bologna, and how she was foiled by the superior arts of the Visconti ; nor was it long before she was forced to defend the cause by arms. Master of Bologna, the tyrant looked upon it as a stepping-stone to new conquests, and every feeling, ambition, cupidity, revenge, the principles of Ghibellinism, the principles of tyranny, pointed out Florence as his next enemy. There were not wanting indications of the coming storm : its rising murmur was heard among the Apennines, where the powerful feudatories, the Ubaldini, the Pazzi, the Tarlati, and others, were in close alliance with Milan ; and the Lombard armies were mustering to the east of the Apennines. But though Florence was not unwarned, it was pretty evident that she could look for no assistance from any quarter, and that her fight with the most formidable external enemy she had ever faced must be single-handed. From Siena, still bowed beneath the effects of the plague, no help could be expected : from Pisa she might be happy if she escaped absolute hostility ; and the appealing glances which she cast towards the two great maritime republics were answered by fierce cries of mutual hatred. Venice and Genoa were at war.

Venice and Genoa were at war. When last we left them their swollen pride and their boiling passions had driven them to the very brink of it : they had now taken the final plunge. The fleets of the two powers were scouring the Archipelago in chase of one another ; and the first blood was drawn off the coast of Negropont, where the Genoese admiral, Filippo Doria, was surprised by the Venetians Ruzzini and Morosini : he made a very pretty fight of it, and contrived to get off with four ships : but he had been taken at too great a disadvan-

tage to be able to save the rest of his fleet, which fell into the hands of the Venetians, and was carried off to Candia. The fugitives made sail for Pera, where they were received by the colonists with open arms. Such vessels as they had in the harbour were hastily fitted out for sea, and placed under Doria's command; and before the Venetians had done rejoicing in their victory, which they caused to be commemorated by an annual festival, Candia was attacked, stormed, and pillaged by the enemy, who recovered their losses, and a good deal of plunder to boot. It was now the turn of the Venetians; and their admiral, Nicolo Pisani, at the head of a powerful fleet, passed the Dardanelles with the double intention of chastising the insolence of the Perotes, and securing the alliance of the Emperor of Constantinople. Cantacuzenus, however, was too cautious to commit himself even at the bidding of the Venetians: much as he hated both Pera and Genoa, he feared them still more; and it is probable that he might have given Nicolo nothing but fair words, and shilly-shallied till he saw which way victory was likely to go, had not the Perotes themselves taken the trouble to quicken his deliberations. In the middle of his doubts and hesitations he was surprised by the sudden fall of a great stone upon one of the houses of the imperial city, launched from a catapult across the water, apparently for fun. Not seeing the matter in its proper light, he demanded apologies and reparation for the insult offered to the majesty of the Cæsars; and apologies were accordingly made; but during their course their love for a joke mastered the gravity of the Perotes, and they let fly another upon the same spot. This was a little too strong; and Cantacuzenus at once made up his mind to condescend to ally himself with the Venetians, and to accept their aid in inflicting condign punishment upon Pera. Preparations were accordingly made for an assault; the Venetians were to storm the place, and the Greeks

were to help, or look on, as the case might be, and at any rate make a great deal of noise ; the Perotes had not the least objection to let them do their worst ; and all parties were looking for the fray with great satisfaction, when Pisani received orders from home to return immediately, for a great Genoese fleet was in the Archipelago, and the Venetian colonies required protection. The Emperor was in despair : but the senate's orders were peremptory, and no Venetian officer dared to disobey ; the fleet set sail on the eve of the assault, and the Eastern Empire was left to conquer the suburb alone. The attempt, indeed, was made, both by sea and land : but the result was what it had been on a former occasion ; and the Perotes had the satisfaction of inflicting a thorough beating on the Greeks and their barbarian allies, at the same time that their more formidable enemies, with crowded sail, were disappearing through the Dardanelles. News of the varying fortunes of the war soon came from beyond the straits, and it was told that Pisani, flying from before the superior forces of the Genoese, had been forced to burn his fleet to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy on the very spot where his countrymen had triumphed the year before : that he had landed his troops, and defended the fort of Caristo against all attacks till the siege had been raised in despair : that the Genoese, baffled on this point, had been trying to stir up the Palæologi to raise a sedition in the Empire ; and finally, that their fleet of sixty sail, well manned and appointed, was bearing up for Constantinople. It presently appeared, issuing from the straits into the Sea of Marmora.

Its commander was a member of a family which, from its achievements, and from the part it played in the history of its country, may perhaps be considered the most distinguished in Europe. It is said that, far in the depths of the middle ages, a young Languedocian nobleman was arrested at Genoa on his way to perform a pilgrimage to the

Holy Land, by a dangerous sickness. He found hospitality in the house of a widowed lady of the country, and was nursed with the utmost tenderness by her and her daughter, who, whether it was her Christian name, or whether it was an epithet bestowed upon her for her beauty, was called Aurea, the golden one. The illness was a long one, and during its course, by a not very extraordinary result, gratitude on the one side, and interest on the other, ripened into a stronger feeling ; and by the time the patient recovered, he and his younger nurse were desperately in love with one another. As soon as he could move, Ardoin (this was the young man's name) religiously fulfilled his pilgrimage ; but on his return to Languedoc, he sold all his possessions, and migrated to fix his home in the country of her whom he loved, and there she became his wife. He acquired large fiefs and high consideration, and transmitted them to his descendants : but they, whether from a tendency to lean most upon the Italian side of their pedigree, or from a desire to perpetuate the appellation which commemorated the tradition of the beauty of their ancestress, took their name from her rather than from him, and called themselves not the children of Ardoin, but the children of Aurea. The Dorias, which was the form their name assumed, soon made themselves celebrated among the warlike races of soldiers and seamen who inhabited the Ligurian sea-board. Nine at least of the family appear on the roll of the early consuls of Genoa during the space of 150 years. They won to themselves honours in numerous expeditions, half crusading, half predatory, against the Moors of Spain and Africa : in company with three other great families of Western Italy, the Malaspinas, the Gherardescas, and the Sismondi, they lent their assistance to the Pisan republic in its conquest of Sardinia, when they won from the Moors the fiefs which we have seen them defend against the Aragonese ; and their greatness and prowess expanding

with the expanding fortunes of their country, they not only produced the most successful of her captains, but earned high distinction in the service of foreign powers. One member of the family led the fleet which crushed the Pisans at Meloria : another broke, for the time, the power of the Venetians by the victory of Curzola : a third we have just seen not ingloriously suffer, and gloriously avenge the defeat of Caristo. To a Doria the Sicilians intrusted their navy in the darkest hour of their national struggle : a Doria commanded the Pisans in their brave but hopeless contest with the King of Aragon : a Doria triumphed in the Eastern seas over the forces of France, Aragon, Naples, and Sicily, banded together against the empire of Constantinople : a Doria was the leader of the French vanguard at Cressy. And their genius and their energy found means of distinction in other careers than those of war and administration. The fragments that remain of the poetry of Prinzivalle Doria, allow us to rank him second to none among the illustrious band of the predecessors of Dante : Jacopo Doria holds a high place among the early historians of Genoa ; and Tedisio Doria is recorded to have perished, or at least disappeared, in a daring attempt made at the end of the thirteenth century, to forestall by two hundred years the great enterprise so successfully carried out by his countryman Columbus at the end of the fifteenth. We are only at the beginning of their career of glory ; their fame rises higher and higher as we advance. The name of Andrea Doria, the greatest seaman whom Italy ever produced, the restorer of the lost independence of his country, the terror of the infidels, the man who singly held the balance between Francis the First and Charles the Fifth, and whose final declaration in favour of the latter fixed the predominance of the house of Austria till our own day, would be enough to ennoble an obscure race ; and Andrea Doria is among the chiefs of his house, like Roland

among the Paladins of Charlemagne. Up to the present century, whenever, in the course of Italian or European history, a light flashes upon Genoa, it almost always reveals the name of this family ; and I know not whether one may be permitted to regret that, while their great rivals, the Spinolas of Genoa, the Sismondi and Gherardescas of Pisa, the Dandoli, Gradenighi and Morosini of Venice, have identified their names with that of Italy and Italian liberty in these latter days, no echo responds to that of the Dorias.

Paganino Doria was the Genoese leader on this occasion. He passed slowly up the Sea of Marmora, levying contributions on the Imperial towns, and exacting vengeance for injuries, and at length cast anchor at Pera. The tables were thus completely turned against the Greeks ; but the season was too late to do much in the way of military operations, and Doria laid up his ships for the winter. He was not allowed, however, to remain undisturbed till the spring : the Venetians assembled another and a larger fleet to replace that which they had lost : its numbers were swelled by twenty-three galleys contributed by the King of Aragon, the mortal enemy of Genoa, and by a large flotilla of Turkish boats : and the combined armaments were ready for action in February. Paganino heard of their approach : his object was to prevent their union with the fleet of Cantacuzenus ; and for this purpose he drew up his ships at the mouth of the Bosphorus. Hardly had he done so when the Veneto-Catalan fleet, of seventy-seven sail, the Venetians under Nicolo Pisani and Pancrazio Giustiniani, the Catalans under Ponzio de Santa Paz, hove in sight, driven by wind and current with such tremendous force, that the Genoese dared not stand the shock. The confederates swept proudly into the Golden Horn, and there received the Imperial contingent of *eight* galleys : the Genoese, manœuvring till they gained the wind, reformed among the Princes' Islands ; and both parties tacked about and pre-

pared for battle. The day was declining, and the waves, lashed into fury by the wind, were swelling high ; but the ardour of the hostile fleets could not be restrained. The Genoese were aided by the wind, the Venetians by a strong current which sets in at evening from the strait, and they drove crashing upon one another. At the first onset three great Venetian galleys bore down upon the flag-ship of Paganino Doria, and attacked it on three sides at once : other Genoese vessels hurried as fast as the waves would permit to his assistance ; and the struggle was concentrated on this point. Night fell, and with night there came a violent thunder-storm : no sort of order could be kept on either side ; but still they fought on. Each ship grappled with its enemy at random ; and such was the darkness and such the fury of the combatants, that in many cases they slaughtered their own friends. It must have been a terrible scene. The din of battle, the shouts of the fighters, the shrieks of the wounded and the drowning, the clash of weapons, the collision of ships, mingled with the roar of the gale and the patter of the rain, and the thunder coming crashing in, and drowning for the moment every other sound ; and the lurid glare of the torches half revealing the fierce faces, the glitter of the steel, the decks slippery with rain and blood, and the whole scene fitfully illuminated by the lightning, must have presented to eye and ear a combination of horrors such as perhaps can be matched by no other battle ever fought. Towards midnight the fury of the storm began to slacken ; and with it slackened that of the combatants. While the issue of the fray was still doubtful, for none could tell in such a night as that was which party had had the advantage, they separated from one another, wearied but not satiated with the slaughter, to count their losses, and to prepare for a renewal of the strife with the morning. The dangers of the night were not over, for the storm set in again after a short interval, and no rest could be allowed to

the sailors or their admirals. It was difficult under these circumstances to ascertain which had won : but it was evident to Doria that his fleet had suffered terribly ; and he looked forward to the morrow with trembling. But, great as his loss had been, that of the enemy had been greater ; twenty-four ships had been captured, besides numbers sunk and disabled : Pisani dared not face a second fight : and the first streak of dawn showed to Doria the confederate fleet retiring into the harbour of Constantinople. On the arrival of a slight Catalan reinforcement, Pisani was urged to try the fortune of war again. He was urged both by the Catalans, whose admiral, Santa Paz, had killed himself to avoid the shame of retreating, and by the Greeks, whose contingent had fled at the first onset : but he steadily, perhaps wisely, refused ; and after experiencing a second storm, by which seven ships of the allied fleet were stranded, he made the best of his way home, and the Catalans after him. The Turks at the same time made their peace with Genoa ; and the Greeks were again left alone. Doria lost no time in pressing his advantage against his one remaining enemy : he blockaded the port of Constantinople at once ; and then, with a daring rashness, which reminds one somewhat of the exploits of the English in India, he landed part of his force on the eastern side of Constantinople, and drove the Greeks before him, occupied the suburbs, and made preparations for an assault on the city itself. This brought the Emperor to his knees : " it was necessary," so he excused himself, " to bend before the lords of the sea ;" and he humbled himself to sue for peace. The terms which Doria insisted on were hard : the alliance with the Venetians and Catalans was not only to be broken off, but no Greek vessels were to be allowed to touch at any of their ports in greater numbers than one at a time ; and the Emperor's subjects were to be forbidden to trade in the Euxine or Sea of Azoff, unless in company with Genoese vessels, or by special permission of

the Doge. These were some of the articles of the proposed treaty ; but, humiliating as they were, Cantacuzenus accepted them ; nor should he be too highly blamed for doing so. He was much above the average of his countrymen, and had his lot been cast in one of the monarchies of the west, he might have reigned honourably and prosperously ; but the character of those whom he was called to rule left him no choice ; and his submission to this ignominious treaty probably saved him from the greater disgrace of seeing Constantinople become a suburb of Pera.

The victorious admiral returned home to receive the congratulations of his countrymen. He had won for them glory and advantage : he had defeated the fleets of three of the great powers of the Mediterranean ; and he had forced one of them to conclude peace on such terms as he chose to bestow. But faction was busy at Genoa : his very success engendered enmity ; and while Pisani was received with honour at Venice, and intrusted with a new fleet, Doria was degraded from the command of that which he had led to victory. The time had been when the Genoese had been more generous towards a defeated admiral : the time was not far distant when the Venetians were to be less generous towards a victorious one. The event showed that, in this instance, Venice was right.

It would be endless if I were to attempt to narrate the remainder of the war with as much detail as I have given to the battle of the Bosphorus. No enterprise on any large scale was undertaken by either side during the summer of 1352, and there was a hope that there might be peace. It was the interest of everybody and the desire of most that such should be the case. The Pope endeavoured to mediate between them ; and an intercessor more powerful than the Pope added his good offices. This was Petrarch. The disunion of Italy was naturally a subject of much lamentation to those of her sons who could raise themselves above the

mutual jealousies of her different states ; and to bewail it became a fashion among men of letters. Italy free and united was an aspiration then as it is now, only it did not penetrate so deep ; and we have seen the influence of the feeling and the effects which it could produce in the case of Rienzi. Petrarch was not perhaps the man to die for the cause, but he was quite willing to talk for it ; and such an opportunity of displaying his eloquence was not to be lost. At the beginning of the war he had tried his exhortations upon the Venetians, whose Doge, Andrea Dandolo, was a friend of his own ; and he sent him several pages of mouth-ing declamation, in which he compared Venice and Genoa to the two eyes of Italy, and said that if they would give one another the kiss of peace, their ships could navigate to Thule, Taprobane, and the Fortunate Islands, and all Europe and Asia would be afraid of them, with much more to the same effect. Dandolo answered with much effusion that it was a beautiful letter, and what a learned man its writer must be, and that he hoped for some more of the same sort ; but that the Genoese were such ruffians that, &c., &c. The unfortunate poet, baffled in this quarter, turned to the other side. The Genoese were perhaps less intellectual than the Venetians, but they were more likely to mind what the Pope said to them ; and as they had gained a victory, they could afford to be content. So he despatched a missive to the Doge and his councillors, in which was contained a very fine description of the appearance presented by Genoa both from the sea and land, a graphic picture of the battle of the Bosphorus, which he seemed to hint was a judgment on the Venetians for not taking his advice, and a string of compliments to the Genoese, whom he represented as the most terrible and, at the same time, the most gentle people in existence ; and, finally, an exhortation to march to the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. This sort of thing was considered at that time to be very fine ; but the people to whom

it was addressed were too much in earnest to pay much attention to it ; and early in 1353 both sides had refitted their fleets, and were prepared for the renewal of the war.

The Genoese admiral this time was a Grimaldi, one of a family who, with the Fieschi, headed the Ligurian Guelfs, as the Dorias and Spinolas did the Ghibellines. The Venetians were again commanded by Nicolo Pisani. So little were the latter weakened by their late defeat, that they were enabled to transfer the war to the waters of Genoa. The Catalans met them with a fleet superior in numbers to their own, and the combined armament undertook the recovery of Sardinia for the King of Aragon. But before they could do anything, Grimaldi was upon them. He appears to have been as much taken by surprise as they were at the encounter ; but it was necessary to fight. It was the anniversary of the day two years before on which Filippo Doria's fleet had been taken at Caristo, and one party had an omen of success, the other a stain to wipe out ; and chaining their vessels together to prevent their lines being broken, they advanced cheerily upon one another. Numbers were on the side of the allies ; but so they had been at the Bosphorus ; and the Genoese were not accustomed to count their enemies. But while the fight was at its hottest, a light breeze sprang up ; and six large Catalan vessels which, having no oars, had been obliged to remain motionless hitherto, bore down with crowded sail upon Grimaldi's flank. Their great size gave irresistible weight to the shock of their onset. The Genoese vessels were driven one upon another, crippled, and sunk ; and Grimaldi, seeing that, as he thought, all was over, detached such ships as he could from the chains which bound them to the rest of the fleet, and set the example of flight. This decided the fate of the day. The Genoese, after a brave but hopeless resistance, were obliged to surrender, and thirty-one vessels and four thousand five hundred prisoners fell into the hands of the

allies. The latter would have had more reason to be proud of their victory if they had not sullied it by the massacre of their captives. The submission of Sardinia to the King of Aragon followed.

Meanwhile, at Genoa the agitation was great. A single ship, with the admiral on board, brought the news of the battle. It was believed at the time that no other vessel had escaped ; and though a few others by degrees came straggling in, they brought but little comfort with them. The Genoese, among their many noble qualities, had not that constancy under misfortune which was so eminent a characteristic of their rivals ; and this great disaster, perhaps the severest they had ever sustained, seems to have completely unmanned them. We can picture to ourselves the scene in the stately streets of the city, women weeping and wringing their hands, crowds at once fierce and trembling surrounding the public palace, some crying for vengeance on Grimaldi, others looking out in terror for the sails of the victorious enemy. Grimaldi owed his escape to the general alarm ; the Ghibellines were clamorous for his blood, but the people were too frightened to think of anything but safety ; and though, according to some accounts of the battle, his punishment would not have been undeserved, and though such a piece of vindictiveness, when the enemy was beneath the walls, would not have been without a precedent in Genoese history, he was not even brought to trial. The thought of what was to be done absorbed every other feeling. No one seems to have thought of peace : amidst all their terror, their hatred of Venice and Aragon was too great to allow them to submit to the acknowledgment of their defeat ; and they had had a specimen of the mercy and forbearance that their submission was likely to elicit. But I am not sure that the acceptance of the enemy's terms would not have been less degrading than what they actually did ; for they put themselves up to sale, and, bar-

tering away their ancient and glorious freedom for the hope of vengeance, they gave up the lordship of their city to the arch-enemy, the Visconti of Milan. The archbishop received their submission with flattering words and large promises ; it seemed as if he were to have all the burdens while they enjoyed all the advantages of the connection ; but beyond the territory of Genoa no one was deceived. Petrarch acted as became his reputation : he was a friend of the Visconti, who, as was the fashion, patronised literature ; and he had no objection to their ruling at Milan, whose people had shown so decided a preference for despotism, and where they at least were better than foreigners. But he loved liberty, perhaps only æsthetically, but still sincerely ; and it grieved him to see her so lightly surrendered by a people for whom she had done so much, and who had done so much for her, as the Genoese. So he wrote another letter to them, imploring them not to take this step. But Petrarch wrote in vain. The Doge Valenti, a well-meaning but timid man, whose irresolution passed into a proverb, had already laid down his office ; and when the Milanese commissioner, a man of illustrious name and honourable reputation, arrived at Genoa to undertake the government, his authority was submitted to without question.

Setting aside all question of the difference between forms of government, the Genoese may be said to have profited by the change. The loss of their command of the sea had produced a scarcity of corn, which Visconti had artfully aggravated by prohibiting the export of grain into Liguria from Lombardy, in the hope of forcing them to yield him their *signoria* ; and now, his object being gained, he opened the markets, and facilitated commerce by improving the roads across the Apennines, so that plenty again reigned in Genoa. He endeavoured also to render them a still greater service, though probably they would not have

esteemed it such, by sending an embassy to Venice with proposals of peace. But though Petrarch was one of the envoys, and though his eloquence might have expected to be more effectual when spoken than when written, the Venetians were as impracticable as ever; and the Archbishop, finding that the war must go on, did the best thing that was to be done under the circumstances, and allowed the command of the Genoese fleet to be conferred on Paganino Doria, who was now called for by the voice of the whole people.

Sardinia was already tired of the yoke of Aragon. The royal officers treated the islanders with a harshness and insolence which, under the circumstances, was at least imprudent; and they began to think they had submitted too hastily. Alghero, the third city in the island, as soon as she felt the pressure, broke out into revolt, drove out the Catalan garrison, and proffered her allegiance to Genoa: Mariano, chief of the powerful race of Serra, armed his vassals in the same cause, and defeated the forces of the royal governor in a pitched battle; and before the latter could be reinforced, the whole country had risen upon them, and they were driven to take refuge in the sole stronghold of which they could retain the possession, the castle of Cagliari. The king was furious: he *talked* of going himself to chastise the rebels, and *did* send a large fleet for the purpose: part of the island was reconquered, Alghero closely besieged, and the Serras shut up in their fortresses; and a Venetian fleet appeared, commanded as before by the formidable Pisani, to assist in giving to the revolt its final blow. But hardly had it cast anchor, when Pisani received pressing orders to return: it was just the same as had happened three years before, and for just the same reason, only stronger. Paganino Doria was in the Adriatic, and master of Parenzo, the wealthiest city in Istria.

The terror which Genoa experienced after Cagliari, was matched by that which fell upon Venice now: but the

effect was different. The Venetians did not lose their self-possession for an instant; the whole population was under arms at once; all the assailable points were occupied by soldiers, and the port guarded by a strong chain. Dandolo, old as he was, was seen everywhere in complete armour, urging on the preparations for defence: his whole soul was occupied by terror, but it was a terror lest, as he passionately exclaimed, the Venetian lion should endure disgrace; and its result was not paralysis, but a restlessness, which ceased not by day or by night. The constancy of the Venetians was their safety. Doria was not a man easily frightened, but he saw that they were of different mettle from the Greeks, and that a *coup-de-main* was not likely to be successful; so he contented himself with laying Parenzo in ashes, as a memento of his visit, and bore proudly down the Adriatic, in hopes of gaining a fresh victory over Pisani, who, on his side, was hastening to meet him. The joy of the Venetians at their escape was alloyed by the death of the Doge: he had been supported by his high spirit through exertions which were too much for his feeble strength: but with the danger the sustaining motive disappeared; and exhausted by fatigue and anxiety he expired, happy in that the labours which had brought death to him had been the salvation of his country. He was buried, as he deserved to be, in St Mark's, the last of the Doges to whom that resting-place was given; and the sculptured effigy which crowns his tomb is not unworthy of him whose likeness it presents, for there is no nobler portrait in that unrivalled series, the monuments of the worthies of Venice.

On arriving at the mouth of the Adriatic, Nicolo Pisani discovered that his fleet required refitting before being ready for action, and for that purpose went into the Bay of Sapienza, off the coast of the Morea, which takes its name from the island which blocks it up, and makes it nearly a

land-locked harbour. Here he was found by the Genoese admiral, with one-half of his vessels drawn up so as to close the passage between Sapienza and the mainland, while the other half were within the bay undergoing repairs. The position might have seemed too strong to be safely attacked ; but Paganino determined to try, and brought his ships up in order of battle. Just as they approached the enemy, Giovanni Doria, the admiral's nephew, was struck with the idea that there might be room for a ship to pass between the end of the Venetian line and the land, made the attempt, and finding it feasible, pushed in with his own galley, and was followed by others. It was the same manœuvre which Philipppo Doria had tried at Caristo, where he was baulked by Marco Morosini pouncing upon his flank ; but though it was a Morosini who commanded the Venetian rear-guard on this occasion, the example of his kinsman was lost upon him, and fortune was enabled to give the Dorias their revenge. The crews of the vessels in the harbour were on shore, eating, sleeping, in short, doing anything, and anywhere, but what they should have been doing ; and young Doria came upon them like a thunderbolt. With hardly a struggle he captured the whole squadron ; and then, flushed with victory, he turned upon Pisani, who was maintaining a hard fight at the entrance of the bay. In front of his squadron he drove two of his prizes, filled with combustibles and set on fire ; and the appearance of the blazing masses struck such terror into the Venetians, that Pisani saw that all was over, and hastily surrendered with the remainder of his fleet. Thirty galleys and nearly six thousand captives fell into the hands of the conquerors.

It was said of the Genoese that they knew how to conquer, but not how to take advantage of their victories. Had Doria made straight for Venice, it is not impossible that he might have captured the city, for this last blow had anni-

hilated for the time the Venetian navy ; and though the citizens hastened to exert themselves individually to arm fresh vessels for sea, they could not hope to be able to make head against the armament which had just defeated their best fleet headed by their best admiral ; and they had nothing else to fall back upon. On the other hand, had he at once hastened to Sardinia, allowing just time for the news of his victory to get there before him, he would probably have put an end to the Catalan dominion in the island. But whether it was that he was anxious to lay up his prizes, or whether it was, as is more probable, that his crews wanted to return home to enjoy their triumph, and would go nowhere else, or for whatever other reason, he made no attempt to strike any further blow, and sailed back to Genoa. The Aragonese took advantage of his inaction to spread the report that he had been defeated ; and the people of Alghero, despairing of succour, surrendered about the same time that their allies were rejoicing in the victory which should have been their deliverance. Mariano di Serra and the Dorias hastened to make their own terms : it may readily be believed that the King of Aragon was not disposed to be exacting ; and they were allowed to retain, and even increase, their possessions. But not the less firmly was the dominion of the house of Aragon established : the independence which these sturdy feudatories defended so well, was more feebly maintained by their successors ; as is generally the case, what the aristocracy lost the government gained, and the Genoese supremacy in Sardinia was extinguished for ever.

But the victory of Sapienza was too decisive for its effects to be obviated even by the slackness of the conquerors. Venice was unable to continue the contest, at least without some interval to repair her losses ; and she was as anxious for peace as she had been for war. Whether the Genoese would have granted it may be doubtful ; but they were

no longer their own masters, and their new sovereign had interests altogether different from theirs. His acceptance of the lordship of Genoa had placed him in an attitude of hostility to a people whose diplomacy was as formidable as their arms ; and the Venetians had small difficulty in finding him enemies near home. The lords of Eastern Lombardy, the Scalas, the Carraras, the Gonzagas, and the Estes, were much disquieted at the growth of the power of the Visconti, who had so lately been no more than their equals ; and by judicious management the Venetians succeeded in uniting them into a league against Milan. They took into their pay one of those companies of foreign adventurers which were then the curse of Italy ; and though there was little hope of seriously damaging the Archbishop's power, and though these ruffians were nearly as mischievous to their employers as to the enemy against whom they were paid to fight, the war was a great burden to him, and one which was not likely to be compensated by any acquisitions whether of glory or territory. He was in consequence very willing to treat with the Venetians. Early in 1355 it was agreed between him and the senate that there should be an armistice for four months ; and negotiations were in the mean time carried on to convert it into a durable peace. But just as it was on the point of expiring, an event occurred which might have frustrated all the endeavours of both parties, and which filled the whole of Italy with astonishment. The Doge of Venice was arrested for high treason, and led forth to die the death of a felon at the head of the Giants' Stairs ;* and the rumour went abroad that the majestic and impassive security of the great Queen

* I suppose it is needless to say that there were no "giants in those days." Giants and stairs, and in fact the whole of that wing of the Ducal Palace, are the work of a century and a half later. There was a wing of the palace in that place, and probably a staircase also ; but it was afterwards destroyed by fire, and rebuilt in the Cinquecento fashion, under the auspices of Sansovino.

of the Adriatic had been threatened by a deadly conspiracy, which, but for an accident that no human prudence could have foreseen, would have levelled her terrible and mysterious government with the dust, and have flooded her streets with a carnage such as would have surpassed the bloodiest of all the bloody revolutions which had fallen upon the other cities of Italy.

The name of Marino Faliero is probably the only one in the whole course of Venetian history (except perhaps those of Francesco Foscari and Antonio Priuli) which is well known to most people in England ; and the fact that it is known might be a sufficient excuse for passing it over lightly. Faliero was not fited to be a doge : the Doge of Venice, in spite of the magnificence of his outward show and the state with which his office was surrounded, was in reality a mere cipher ; his position was so completely that of a servant of the Grand Council, with a very fine livery, but rather shabby pay and no perquisites, that it is difficult to understand the undeniable fact, that the office was sought after by men of the highest character and the most striking abilities. He was not allowed to choose the members of his own council as the old doges had done ; the senate took that trouble off his hands : he was not allowed to open letters on public business except in their presence, while they on their part might dispense with his when *they* opened them ; and though the Grand Council had not yet decreed, as it afterwards did, that the Doge should be obliged to buy himself a robe of cloth-of-gold within a month of his election, or that if his household bills were not regularly discharged and vouchers produced for them, his salary should be stopped till they were, yet the spirit which afterwards dictated these regulations was very clearly manifested in its relations with its prince ; so that the ducal *berretta*, whatever it might seem, was by no means a mark of unalloyed comfort or untarnished honour to its wearer. Now Marino

Faliero by no means relished this gilded servitude. He was very proud, and he had many excuses, both inherited and personal, for his pride. A Faliero had been one of the consuls of Padua who headed the first migration to the islands of the Lagoons in 421 ; another had been among the twelve electors, who, as I think I have said, nominated the first doge in 697 ; and two other members of their family had worn the ducal coronet with honour at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries, Vitale, who was chosen in 1082, and Ordelafo, one of the greatest of the series, who, after a reign which was both prosperous and glorious for his country, perished fighting against the Hungarians at Zara in 1117. Marino's own actions were worthy of his race : he had spent a long life in the service of the state with high distinction ; and he owed his election as doge to his having won, on the very spot where his ancestor had fallen, over the same enemies, a victory which crushed for ever the constant and persevering insubordination of Zara.* But though, as the restorer to the dominion of his country of an indifferent or hostile province held by a powerful and warlike enemy, he might claim to share the military reputation of Belisarius, Marino had not that unswerving and patient loyalty which distinguished that great man, and which one hardly knows whether to admire or despise. He was, as I have said, proud, and he was, besides, of a passionate and hasty temper ; and the slavery which the law imposed upon him, and which doubtless was not alleviated in practice, galled his very soul. I can imagine him brooding over the slights cast upon him, and aggravating them to himself by doing so—and perhaps, just as he had worked himself up to a high pitch, some fresh insult, or what he would call such, would be

* The Venetians lost Zara again, and not very long after our present date ; but their doing so was not caused by a revolt of the inhabitants, but by a Hungarian conquest.

offered him, or he would be forced to feel his complete dependence in some unlooked-for way. It was when he was in this mood of constantly renewed irritation against the rulers of his country that he was subjected to the gross, and what one may call blackguardly, affront which Michael Steno offered to his wife. Gross and blackguardly it would have been under any circumstances ; but, independent of the fact of the Dogaressa being the wife of the offender's sovereign, it was one which was sure to sting deeply, for she was a young and beautiful woman, whom Marino had married in his old age, and of whom, as often happens, he was dotingly fond and furiously jealous. Steno was arrested, found guilty, and condemned to a month's imprisonment. The punishment was a lenient one, perhaps too lenient ; and Faliero, who had been maddened by the outrage, and to whom it seemed that this sentence was the crown and completion of a long series of indignities, purposely inflicted on him by the Government, was beside himself with rage, and would have sold his soul to be revenged. He was just in the state of mind which it is said the devil likes to see people in when he has any particular work to be done ; and that personage took advantage of his opportunity. His emissary presented himself while the Doge was still raving, by name Israel Bertuccio, and by profession chief of the arsenal. This man came to complain of a blow which he had received from a nobleman, and for which he hoped to obtain, at the hands of the chief of the state, satisfaction and revenge. The conversation between the two may be easily imagined, and was probably very like that which has been put into their mouths by Lord Byron. It resulted in an agreement between the two that they would conspire to overthrow the Government, and jointly exact retribution for their wrongs. Bertuccio had no difficulty in finding accomplices. Though the rule of the Venetian aristocracy was, as I have said, popular, yet there were not wanting in

its ranks men whose insolence and riotous conduct had brought disgrace and hatred upon their order ; and he soon collected a small knot of desperadoes who were ready to help his schemes of revenge. They met within the palace, and there, in the presence and with the concurrence of the Doge, devised and swore to perpetrate a promiscuous and unsparing massacre of the nobility. Their plan was, that on a given morning (it was the 15th April 1355), the Doge was to order the alarm-bell of St Mark's to be tolled ; that a rumour was to be spread at the same time that the Genoese fleet was in the port ; and that the conspirators, each at the head of a body of men, who were to be told that it was the senate's orders that certain individual nobles should be put to death, were to rush to the Piazza, and, taking advantage of the confusion, to slaughter them all as fast as they made their appearance. The plot was well laid ; but one of the conspirators let something out which led a member of his gang, named Beltran of Bergamo, to believe that there was something more in it than the orders of the signoria were likely to warrant ; and, in his alarm, he carried his suspicions before one of the Ten, Nicolo Lioni. It was the night of the 14th, and no time was to be lost. Lioni, after visiting the Doge, from whom, as may be imagined, he got very little satisfaction, summoned a meeting of his colleagues, and laid before them the report of the conspiracy, together with the names of such of its authors as Beltran could furnish. The council had a very short time for deliberation ; but a very short time was enough. Guards were placed all over the town ; the bell-tower was closed against all comers ; and the conspirators were arrested at their own houses, brought before the council, and put to the torture. Their confessions betrayed who their leader was ; and the Ten at once determined to put their prince on his trial. There had been no precedent for doing so. Several doges in the old stormy times had

perished in popular outbreaks, but they were not by law amenable to the jurisdiction of any tribunal ; and the Ten, to mark their sense of the gravity of the occasion, called in a *Giunta*, or supplementary commission of twenty nobles of the highest consideration, which, by the way, became afterwards a permanent body. But they did not shrink from action. They summoned the Doge before them, confronted him with his chief accomplices, and, upon their testimony and his own confession, condemned him to death as a traitor against the state. The sentence was executed on the second day after that fixed for the conspiracy to break out ; and Venice, more than ever convinced of the power, the resolution, and the wisdom of her rulers, acquiesced contentedly in a yoke which it was hopeless and perhaps not desirable to break. The next doge was a Gradenigo, of a name significant of aristocratic rule ; and it may be thought that the descendant of him who had enabled his order to shut the Grand Council against the people, was a fitting person to select to mark their victory over their prince.

To the Gradenighi, though with considerable modifications, may be applied the charge which Lord Macaulay's plebeian minstrel, in the ballad of Virginia, brings somewhat unjustly against the Claudii. They won "triumphs within the city towers ;" but they were not fortunate against foreign enemies. Pietro Gradenigo was doge at the time of the disastrous defeat of Curzola ; and Giovanni, who now succeeded to the throne, found his first occupation in patching up, after a still more disastrous defeat, a peace with the same enemy. Probably the influence of the Visconti * may have been exerted to induce the Genoese to be content with comparatively moderate terms ; but the Vene-

* Not the Archbishop, but his successors. It will be seen that this Veneto-Genoese war runs beyond the date at which this chapter is supposed to terminate : but I thought it better to bring it to an end without carrying it on into the next one, to avoid confusion.

tians had to submit to an acknowledgment of their defeat, for they gave up the point originally at issue, by consenting first to prohibit their subjects from trading at Tana for three years, during which time they were to set up a bank at the Genoese settlement of Kaffa, and secondly, to pay two hundred thousand florins for the expenses of the war. This treaty was decided upon in May: its ratification was delayed for three months, to give time for the King of Aragon to become a party to it. But the latter was indisposed to make any concessions relative to Sardinia; and his allies, finding him obstinate on this point, settled their own affairs without him, and the two great cities were again at peace.

Long, however, before this time, the storm had burst upon Florence. Early in 1351 that city was thrown into alarm by the news that one of the passes of the Apennines had been betrayed into the hands of the Archbishop of Milan, and that Giovanni Visconti of Oleggio, at the head of an army which had been collected for the ostensible purpose of besieging Imola, whither Durfort had retired with his tail between his legs, had crossed the mountains into Tuscany, and was within four miles of Pistoia. Now the Florentines, in order to guard against this very danger, had just done what they had no business to do, and made an attack upon Pistoia, so that they might get into their own hands the passes in that part of the Apennines. This attempt had been quite successful: Pistoia, from having been a dependency, became a province: the passes were put, as it seemed, into proper custody; and here was the result. Florence seemed all ways destined to blunder, especially when she tried to show off that she could be high-handed and treacherous as well as her neighbours. The vices which were natural, and no more than to be expected, in Viscount Milan, sat very ungracefully on steady respectable old John Florins.

An embassy was sent to the Milanese general to say that

the republic was at a loss to understand this very extraordinary conduct on his part, and got an answer to this effect, that the archbishop was extremely sorry if they suffered the least annoyance by what he was doing : but his gentle and paternal heart was so much grieved at the disorder and faction which reigned in Florence and other cities of Tuscany, that he had resolved to exert the power which Providence had given him for the sake of bringing them to the same blissful state of concord which so happily prevailed in his own dominions : that he had no doubt that the force of his observations would be so apparent that they would at once comply with his request to be allowed to reform their government for them ; but should they be so blinded as not to do so, that he would be under the painful necessity of ravaging their territory with fire and sword till they were brought to a better mind. Sismondi calls this grossly hypocritical : but hypocrisy implies an intent to deceive ; and no one, certainly not the Archbishop of Milan, could expect any one to be taken in by such a pretence as that ; and it appears to me to have been a piece of pure impertinence. The Florentines, at least, appear to have looked at it in this light. They lost no time in preparing for defence. To cope with the Lombards in the field was impossible, for they had no standing army, and the suddenness of the attack left no time to hire mercenaries ; but they could still play the game which had baffled Henry of Luxemburg. Such troops as they had were sent to garrison Pistoia and Prato ; the cattle were driven off the valley of the Arno to places of safety ; and arming the burgher militia for the defence of the walls, they calmly awaited the enemy's approach. The latter swept the whole country up to the very gates without meeting any resistance : but there they were checked ; and as there were no crops to plunder on account of the season, and as the peasants had carried away everything that they could, they soon got tired of living at free quarters. Nothing was to be done where they were ;

and though the troops of those days were fitter to fight a battle than to storm a town, Visconti saw that, unless he pursued the enemy to their strongholds, he might as well recross the Apennines, turned out of the Campagna of Florence, and laid siege to Scarperia.

If any place could have promised an easy victory, it would have been this. It was little better than an open town : it was defended by a wall on one side only : on the others there was nothing but a ditch and palisade ; and its garrison consisted of 500 men. Probably Visconti thought so too, and looked upon it merely as a means of blooding his men before he set them to more serious work : but he found a resistance which he little counted on. For nearly three months his army—which, swelled as it was by the retainers of the Ghibelline lords of the mountains, must have been fully 15,000 strong—was kept at bay. The Florentines strained every nerve to send assistance. Every access was closed up by the Milanese and their allies ; but the heroism of the defence had kindled a spirit which would not brook discouragement ; and at length a small and select band succeeded in making their way with skill and daring across the enemy's lines and reaching the town. Their arrival was hailed with overflowing joy. It was not so much the material strength which was brought as the assurance that they were not forgotten in Florence, that gladdened the hearts of the garrison ; and the thought that this handful of brave men had exposed themselves to death in order to have the privilege of sharing their perils, roused them to a degree of enthusiasm which put all ideas of surrender farther off than ever. Yet the walls were weak, and rent and breached through and through by the constant hail of the besiegers' engines ; and Visconti, seeing the state of the place, and feeling that it was in no condition to resist, ordered a general assault. A desperate struggle ensued. The Milanese attempted to storm in several places at once. They filled the ditch with fagots, and

swarmed up the breaches in crowds. And as fast as they became tired their places were taken by fresh troops. The besieged, on the other hand, had no respite. They disputed every inch of ground, and poured down stones, arrows, and boiling pitch on the heads of the assailants : but they had no reserve to repair their losses or give them an instant of repose. For six hours this unequal struggle lasted without intermission ; and at length Visconti saw that no more was to be done for that day. Four days were allowed by him to give his soldiers the necessary repose, and then he renewed the attack with the same fury as before, but with no better success. The besieged, triumphant, but worn out by fatigue and grievously thinned by death and wounds, were reposing from the struggle, when a loud outcry told that the enemy were upon them again. A bright moonlight revealed their advancing columns. While the garrison dragged themselves to the breach, a picked body of 300 men, stealing round to that side of the town which was in the shade, took advantage of the darkness and confusion to endeavour to scale the wall where it was likely to be undefended. The admirable discipline which the Florentines preserved amidst their danger enabled them to defeat this stratagem. The enemy were allowed to approach the walls, to plant ladders, to commence the escalade : but before they reached the top, the garrison with loud shouts sprang forward. The ladders, with their living load, were hurled violently backwards, and such a shower of missiles was sent down upon the heads of the assailants that they were glad to escape. Meanwhile the battle continued on the other side. The Viscontine troops, stimulated by a promise of double pay and a large donative in case of success, fought with more than ordinary ferocity ; but they were met as vigorously as ever. All night long they strove to force their way in : the fight hardly slackened for an instant ; but at daybreak, finding further attempts fruitless, Visconti gave the signal for a retreat,

which proved to be not only the abandonment of the assault but of the siege. It was time that such should be the case. The besiegers had suffered terribly: their camp was full of wounded men; what was worse, provisions began to fail; and scarcity was followed by disease. The joy and pride of the garrison, as they saw the enemy's tents struck and their columns in full retreat, may be conceived: and their joy and pride were justified; for they had held out for two months, in what could hardly be called a fortified town, against an overwhelmingly superior force of the best soldiers in Italy, and earned for the name of Scarperia a place among those of the most honourable defences of besieged towns in the history of the world.

The war was not concluded: but it slackened after this great effort. The Visconti made no farther attempts to conquer Tuscany by force, and they endeavoured to attain their purpose by a method still more congenial, intrigue. Already had they stirred up a conspiracy at Arezzo, which narrowly missed success, and endeavoured to work upon the anti-Guelf and anti-Florentine feelings of the Pisans to induce them to break the peace. The Aretine plot was detected and punished, and the Pisans refused to retaliate upon their rivals the ungenerous treatment which they had more than once experienced. But a league was formed and organised among the feudal nobility of Tuscany; and a combined attack on different sides of the Florentine territory was made in the course of the year following the siege of Scarperia. But this campaign was as unsuccessful as the former had been; and all parties being now equally weary of the contest, the Pisans were enabled in the following year to offer their mediation. They succeeded in arranging a peace which left the belligerents in very much the same condition which they were in before the war, barring always the blood and the money which had been so unprofitably spent. It was well for both the Archbishop and the Republic

that they did so; for it was in the course of this year that the former, by accepting the signory of Genoa, became involved in hostilities with the Venetian confederacy; and the latter was exposed to an unexpected invasion from a new enemy—a horde of free companions organised into an army, uniting the licence of robbers with the discipline of soldiers, and commanded by the ablest of all the chiefs who lived by their swords upon the plunder of unhappy Italy, the Chevalier de Montreal.

Few regular armies at that time were conducted with the order which Montreal had infused into his brigands. He had a treasurer, secretaries, and councillors. The strictest peace was maintained in his camp by judges appointed by him to decide the differences between his men; and his justice was unimpeachable but severe. The booty which was acquired in their forays was brought by the soldiers to a common place of deposit, and there impartially divided among them; and there was no difficulty in converting it, after its distribution, into money, for the persons of merchants who came to the camp were inviolable. The terror which he inspired was such as generally to insure him a plentiful black-mail, without the trouble of fighting, wherever he went; and this, again, insured his having no lack of soldiers. Adventurers of all nations flocked to his banner. The wealth which they obtained by plunder was displayed in arms, horses, and appointments which rivalled those of the household troops of any sovereign in Europe; and the Great Company—for such was the title which it assumed—might fairly claim to take rank among the powers of Italy. But Montreal aspired to something more. Long before he had attained to the eminence on which he now stood, he had determined to found for himself a hereditary principality; and the wealth which, to his followers, was the end and object of their depredations, was regarded by him as the way to empire. In the distracted state in which Italy then

was, it might have been easy for him to succeed, if he had been contented with a small acquisition; for the weakness of many of the petty states would have rendered them an easy conquest; and the tyranny of their present masters would have made his rule lightly acquiesced in by the people, even had it been heavier than it probably would have been. But his ambition soared too high to stoop at such small game; and, like Juvenal's Hannibal, he thought nothing was done until he had planted his banner in the middle of the streets of Rome. To conciliate the people, to overawe the nobles, to check the pretensions, while showing reverence to the person, of the Pope, to issue his edicts from the Capitol in defiance of Legate and Senator, Orsini and Colonna, and, reinforcing his irresistible army by copious levies among the Roman people, to lead forth the eagles, as of yore, to conquest, and revive in his person the ancient empire of the Cæsars;—such were the visions which flitted before his eyes. But the pear was not yet ripe; and being at the present moment at liberty to go where he pleased, he undertook an expedition to which he was stimulated alike by cupidity and by revenge.

Foremost among the houses which, imitating their more powerful Lombard neighbours, had erected for themselves principalities among the cities of Romagna, was that of Malatesta. No other race in that district, perhaps no other in the whole peninsula, so well illustrates the character of the petty princes of Italy at this time. Cruel and exacting towards their subjects; fickle and treacherous towards foreign powers; greedy after acquisitions, preferring to make their way to them by diplomatic finesse and cunning rather than by force, yet not shrinking from force if necessary; liberal and judicious patrons of literature and the arts; and brave and accomplished soldiers,—such, generation after generation, were the Malatestas. Their capital, Rimini, situated so close upon the coast that its walls

are washed by the Adriatic, still bears about it, more than any other of the Romagnole cities, signs of having once been the abode of art-loving and munificent rulers; and their name appears, I think, more frequently than any other on the distinguished roll of those who, combining the character of princes with that of condottieri, without any thought of degradation, caused the Italian states, during the latter half of this, and the whole of the next century, to look for the leaders of their mercenaries among the occupants of their thrones. The present lord of Rimini had taken service in the previous year [1352] with Joanna of Naples, and had been thus brought into contact with Montreal, who, with the natural instinct of a plunderer, had taken advantage of the state of Southern Italy to join himself to one of the parties in the civil war which was raging in that quarter. Malatesta had been entirely successful. He had shut up Montreal in Aversa, forced him to capitulate, taken all his plunder from him, and turned him out of the kingdom. As we have seen, it did not take the latter long to recover, and far more than recover, his losses; and the first use which he made of his renovated power was to march upon Rimini.

The Malatestas were, as I have said, fond of literature; and they may possibly have recollected the classical legend of the Lernaean hydra, which, as fast as one head was cut off, grew two new ones in place of it: at any rate their chief must rather have wished he had been defeated last year instead of defeating; for he knew perfectly well that he had no means of resisting the enemy whom he had provoked. Only one hope remained. The Guelf League of Lombardy* were his allies: his politics were the same as theirs; and they might be supposed to be more anxious than he was himself to preserve the freedom of Italy from

* The name "League of Lombardy" was still kept up, though not a single city of what is now, and was then, understood by the name of Lombardy, was a member of it.

being trodden under foot by a nomad horde of mercenary robbers. Only three republics remained to support that respected name — Florence, Perugia, and Siena : even this remnant would have been abundantly strong to have given its ally the means of making head ; but the Sienese and Perugians would do nothing ; and the Florentines were just at that time unfortunate in their rulers. With their system of government it was unavoidable that this should be the case sometimes ; and though, as a rule, the national spirit was pretty sure to prevent any unworthy line of policy from being adopted, yet at the present moment a species of lassitude — possibly a reaction from their energetic struggle against the Visconti—appears to have come over the people. They roused themselves sufficiently to send a small body of troops to aid their ally : but these were too few to render any real assistance ; and Malatesta, seeing the game was up, sent them back, and flung himself at Montreal's feet. Montreal consented to spare his territory on condition of an enormous ransom. The sum was much above what could be conveniently paid, and Malatesta, in order to do so, had to dismiss all his troops : the latter at once joined themselves to the Great Company, so that Montreal profited doubly by this raid ; and the unhappy lord of Rimini, without money and without soldiers, had reason to curse the treachery and fickleness of the vaunting and pretentious League of Lombardy.

He speedily had the consolation of being revenged. The manner in which the Tuscan cities had behaved to their ally was just the sort of thing which was calculated to make them the objects of Montreal's very particular attentions, especially as their wealth was notorious ; and he marched at once across the Apennines to pay them a visit. He took Perugia first—she was the weakest, and had, probably, the least courage of the three ; and her submission would break up the confederacy, besides frightening the

others. The Florentines saw that this would happen ; and, with a momentary revival of last year's energy, sent both money and troops to their allies, in hopes of insuring their steadfastness. But Montreal met this move by telling the Perugians that he had no quarrel with them, and that, if they would allow him a free passage through their territory, he would respect their neutrality. The Perugians, delighted to escape so easily, agreed to this proposal, and left their allies to shift for themselves ; and the Company lost no time in marching upon Siena. Siena, thinking resistance impossible, bought herself off for 16,000 florins ; and it was now the turn of Florence. One Tuscan power remained by whose help the Florentines might have weathered the storm : but Pisa showed little disposition for their alliance, and they had to stand alone. One might have expected that a people who had so often known how to defend their independence against the most powerful sovereigns of Italy might have held out against this great horde of robbers ; but, as I said, they were not quite themselves at this juncture, and were, besides, badly governed. Montreal ravaged the Campagna of Florence from end to end, and had amassed an immense loot, when the magistrates of the republic sued for peace. The adventurer consented to sell it to them for 25,000 florins : Pisa at the same time made him a payment of 16,000 with the same object : and leaving a track of desolation behind it, and preceded by the fame that it had made the mighty confederacy of the Guelfs, and the hitherto indomitable Republic of Florence, bow their necks in the dust before it, the Great Company, wealthier and more powerful than it ever was before, departed for Lombardy, to throw its formidable sword into the scale of the Signors of Venetia, warring against Milan.

Barely ten years have elapsed since the date, now seeming so long ago, that we closed the second period of the

Italian summer at the expulsion of the Duke of Athens ; and yet those ten years have wrought a great change. The horizon which then, though not cloudless, seemed on the whole so hopeful, is now almost completely obscured. Southern Italy, which under the rule of King Robert had been peaceful and prosperous, and the powerful ally of freedom, is now become a scene of chaos : a fearful tragedy at the palace has shaken the throne, and been followed by a victorious invasion of the wild tribes of the Danube : the capital is oppressed by a grasping and cowardly government, whose chiefs are stained, in public estimation, with the foulest of crimes : the provinces are torn by an endless civil war, and plundered by successive hordes of foreign adventurers ; and the frame of society appears to be going to pieces. As we cast our eyes northwards, we see Rome, after a short interval of peace and good government, fall back into an anarchy even worse than that from which Rienzi had extricated her : we see Romagna, which had been comparatively quiet, seething like a boiling cauldron from the fire kindled by the unscrupulous lust for territory of the popes : worse still, we see an organised brigandage, a powerful and disciplined army of plunderers, bound by no ties except to its general, shackled by no responsibility, and guided by the most consummate craft and daring, paving the way to empire for its leader over the necks of the sole remaining adherents of freedom. And looking still further on, the clouds become blacker and blacker ; for a tyrannical power, the like of which Italy has not yet seen, is spreading its baleful influence all over the north,—not a straggling and ill-cemented mass of provinces like the domains of Mastino della Scala, but, though far more extensive than those had been, yet perfectly compact : a power enthroned at Milan, the Queen of Lombardy, with one foot planted on the great republic of Bologna, and the other on the still greater republic of Genoa, and repre-

sented in the person of the ablest of all the formidable men who had arisen to threaten the independence of the peninsula. And yet worse is behind ; for in proportion as the strength of tyranny has increased, that of liberty appears to have diminished. Florence has indeed succeeded in repelling the first onset of the Visconti ; but the effort has apparently so exhausted her that she would not be able to withstand a second. The Guelf League, of which she is the heart and soul, has lost all prestige by its abandonment of Malatesta ; it has been broken up by the mere presence of Montreal ; and its members recriminate upon one another the accusations of treachery and desertion. Her ancient spirit appears to have gone from Pisa : the people who twice, at moments of dire exhaustion, roused themselves to meet and fling back the confederated forces of nearly all Tuscany, are now content to purchase the forbearance of the Great Company. Venice, which alone preserves her republican energy, is engaged in a desperate war, the objects of which are not Italian ; and her rivals are the subjects of the Archbishop of Milan. The prospects of Italian freedom might well seem gloomy ; and for the moment a desponding mind might have thought that she was about to be trampled under foot, and that over her corpse the fight for the kingdom of Italy would be waged between Visconti and Montreal.

But it was not so to be. The same Providence which had so often shielded Florence, and, with her, the cause which she had taken as her especial charge, manifested itself to save her now. Montreal, in the pursuit of his ambitious schemes, had betaken himself to Rome alone, leaving his army in Lombardy under the command of a subaltern, when he was seized by the orders of Rienzi, during his second brief tenure of the rule of the Eternal City, tried, condemned, and executed as a robber ; and a few months later, a malady, which none at the time thought dangerous, cut suddenly short the projects of Giovanni

Visconti. The Great Company, from having been a terrible engine of power to promote the designs of Montreal, subsided, in the hands of his feebler successors, into a mere body of mercenary troops. The death of Visconti was followed by a break-up of the great Lombard power : his wide domains were divided between his three nephews, who claimed to have an equal right to the inheritance : Genoa, now no longer curbed by the strong hand of the archbishop, broke into revolt, and shook off the yoke : an ambitious lieutenant established an independent sovereignty at Bologna : the chiefs of Lombardy and Piedmont attacked the tottering colossus on the east and on the west ; and the greatness of the house of Visconti seemed to be about to fade away, as that of the Castracani and that of the Scalas had done before it.

How far this idea was realised, and whether the free States were ever able to recover from their present abasement, will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER IX.

*The Period of Summer—The Battle of Liberty against Tyranny
—Third Half-Century—Concentration of the Struggle (con-
tinued)—Bernabo and Galeazzo Visconti.*



ATTEO, Bernabo, and Galeazzo, sons of Stefano Visconti, the archbishop's brother, partitioned among themselves the broad realm of Milan.

It was not, however, such a partitioning as to remove all cause for anxiety and alarm among their neighbours. The brothers looked upon their respective allotments, not as different sovereignties, but as different departments of the same sovereignty ; and while each administered the government, and enjoyed the revenues of his own share of the provinces, Milan, the capital, and Genoa, the greatest of the dependencies, belonged to them in common, and were ruled in their joint name. There was some consolation in the thought that, whether the great tyranny was broken up or not, unity of action, especially for aggressive purposes, could not be expected from a triumvirate as much as from a dictator, even if its members were not jealous of one another, as triumvirates generally were : but still there might be considerable danger, and it was very important to know what manner of men they respectively were.

All historians, I think, fix upon the Archbishop Gio-

vanni's death as the point from which the character of the family begins to deteriorate. It was bad enough before, many will think : but still there was a possibility of being worse. The high spirit, the masculine energy, the statesmanlike largeness of view, the justice and humanity which they could display whenever they had no particular reason for their opposites, even the military courage, which belonged to the earlier Visconti, begin to disappear ; and this was fully illustrated by the characters of the three who now come forward as the chiefs of their house.

Matteo, the eldest brother, was indolent, stupid, cruel, profligate, sensual. He passed his days and nights in luxurious pleasure, for which his subjects had to pay in more ways than one : the duties of government he declined as too much trouble ; and devolving them on his brothers, only required of them that they should continue to allow his name to stand first on all public acts. His share of his uncle's inheritance was, roughly speaking, the *Æmilian* provinces.

The ruling passion of Galeazzo, to whom Piedmont was assigned, was vanity. This displayed itself in the splendour of his establishment and the general expensiveness of his habits, and, above all, in his inordinate desire for the extremely costly luxury of royal family connections. To gratify this taste, he gave his daughter Isabella an enormous portion in order to have the privilege of being father-in-law to Lionel, Duke of Clarence, and some years later paid a still larger sum to procure for his son the hand of the daughter of the King of France. John the Good agreed to this, as he would have agreed to almost anything for money at that time : but he did not care to conceal his contempt for the upstart race of tyrants with whom he endured the degradation of allying himself ; and in order to make his son-in-law less unworthy of his bride, he bestowed upon him a French title, which, under the circum-

stances, was rather an insult than an honour. Galeazzo, however, was satisfied. The splendour of a royal connection was enough to induce him to impoverish himself for the sake of bringing about, under circumstances humiliating to himself, a marriage, the results of which, as the event proved, were fraught with misery to unborn generations. He was the youngest of the three.

Bernabo, the second, had the greater part of Central Lombardy. He was much abler than either of his brothers, and probably much worse also. His nature was thoroughly false—false after a fashion which might have made those of his uncle Luchino, or Mastino, della Scala seem honest by comparison; his exactions, which not only were very exorbitant in amount, but also extremely galling from the manner in which they were levied, made him an object of detestation to his subjects; and his cruelty matched that of Eccelino or the Duke of Athens; while he had not, or at least did not show, the personal courage which none denied to the latter of those tyrants, and which serves to lessen, to some extent, the horror with which we regard the former.

As far as appeared, the three brothers did not seem inclined to quarrel among themselves, and the affairs of Milan were conducted with tolerable unanimity. This reflects great credit on their sense. It can hardly be attributed to fraternal affection. For Matteo, by his excesses, excited such an amount of hatred among the citizens of Milan as seriously to endanger the stability of the family's government; and his brothers, after laying their heads together to see how they could best put a check upon his goings on, agreed that the simplest and shortest mode of doing so would be to have him poisoned. This happy idea was carried out with great success. Matteo ceased to live, and his territories were divided between Bernabo and Galeazzo, who doubtless thought that they had reason to congratulate themselves on having the double advantage of

securing their rule and enlarging their respective dominions with so little risk and trouble.

Just before they did so, however, the territories in question had been shorn of their most important province. Bologna had been confided by the Archbishop to the government of his kinsman and namesake, Giovanni of Oleggio, the same who conducted the fruitless siege of Scarperia. He was an able man, whose military talents rivalled those of the earlier, as his rascality did that of the later Visconti; and though he was pretty loyal and trustworthy to the great prelate to whom he owed his appointment, his successors, who judged, and in this instance judged rightly, of others by themselves, began very soon to think that they had better get rid of him. They did not at first venture to take any steps openly against him: but their agents endeavoured to weaken him by intriguing against him among the people, which was quite superfluous, for they could not be made to hate their governor more than they did already, only it did not matter what they thought; and also, which was much more important, among his soldiers. At last they thought they had sufficiently secured their ground, threw off the mask, and sent to him a notice of dismissal, and an order to resign his command. But he of Oleggio had discovered what they were about, and had made his counter-preparations. Feigning to comply with their injunctions, he asked for a short delay before giving up his post, under pretence of not alarming or irritating the soldiers, who might be disgusted at his abrupt dismissal. The Visconti had the inconceivable blindness to agree to this; and their kinsman took his measures accordingly. On a set day he called his people together in the public place, and addressed them in an eloquent harangue. He did not deny that his rule had been marked by some little severity—(he had been the most cruel tyrant in Italy till Bernabo and Galeazzo came upon the scene)—but for this

he was not to blame. His own heart was overflowing with the milk of human kindness, but his masters, the princes of Milan, had forced him to perpetrate atrocities from which his every feeling revolted. But he was resolved to be the minister of their crimes no longer : he would no longer stain his conscience by obeying their bloodthirsty orders. "Men of Bologna," exclaimed he in a transport of righteous enthusiasm, "go home to your wives and families, and tell them to their comfort that the evil days are past, and they will have in future no ruler but myself : or rather," he added, correcting himself, "they will have me as the nominal head of their republic, and a partaker with its free and independent citizens of the toils as of the honours of government." Not a word of this was believed, and I hardly suppose he meant it to be so ; but it was an advertisement for power, and looking at it in that light, the Bolognese began to question whether it would do them any good to change their present master for Matteo. The Ghibelline aristocracy, who were stanch partisans of Giovanni, worked all their influence in his favour ; and there being no strong counter-influence exerted, they succeeded in inducing the worn-out and apathetic citizens to acquiesce in, or at least not to oppose, the continuance of a dominion, of which at least it could be said that they knew the worst. He was proclaimed by the voice of the people lord paramount of Bologna ; and if there really was no other course open to them than a choice of servitude, I think it must be admitted that, on the whole, they decided wisely. The new ruler lost no time in securing his position : he gained over most of the mercenaries under his command : turned the others out of the city : made himself sure of almost all the fortresses in the Bolognese territory : applied for and received the support of the Marquis of Este and his allies ; and, finally, made common cause with them in the war which they were waging against the Visconti.

I have rather anticipated the course of events in my desire to set clearly forward the character and position of the great tyrannical house and its chiefs ; and at the risk of being tedious, I must go back to the time of the Archbishop's death. Hardly had he closed his eyes when his capital was honoured by the presence of an Emperor of Rome, come on one of those fruitless expeditions after glory and profit, which were the terror of the Italians, and which, after stirring up an immense amount of faction and disturbance, ended by leaving the unhappy country in a greater state of confusion than ever, and bringing upon the imperial name distrust and contempt.

The present Emperor was Charles the Fourth. He was the son of John of Bohemia, and owed his position as Emperor to the intrigues of Pope Clement the Sixth, who having, as we have seen, quarrelled with Louis the Bavarian, sought to damage him by stirring up sedition in the Empire. Poor Louis was not a very estimable man : but he was not without good qualities, and one is sorry for him for being so desperately bullied in his old age, more especially as he had made, for the sake of quiet, more advances to the Pope than was quite consistent with imperial dignity. Each competitor of course had his supporters : they were pretty evenly matched ; and Germany would have been deluged with civil war, had not Louis very obligingly put an end to the difficulty by dying at the critical moment, to everybody's joy, except, I suppose, the Pope's, who lost the chance of profiting by a fight for the imperial crown. Charles, who was at once acknowledged by all parties, took an early opportunity after his accession of making his way across the Alps in search of the crowns of Lombardy and of the Empire. He was not quite unknown to the Italians, for he had been, a good many years before, governor for his father at Lucca ; and, since he became Emperor, he had been in communication with the envoys both of the Tuscan and

Venetian leagues for the purpose of concerting some plan for breaking down the power of the lords of Milan.

However, he did not allow his political antipathy to interfere with his travelling arrangements. After paying a preliminary visit to Verona, he went to Milan, and went, not like his predecessors at the head of an army, but with an unarmed and peaceful retinue, "more like a travelling pedlar," the Italians said, "than like a great Emperor." The Visconti brothers received him with great hospitality: they delighted in the magnificence of the reviews which they exhibited to do him honour; and even, in the excess of their loyal enthusiasm, caused the same troops to defile before the windows several times a day, so as to give the idea that their forces were much more numerous than they actually were. Charles was no doubt much flattered; but the sight of this vast array of troops suggested ideas to his mind not altogether pleasing, for, as I said, he had no soldiers of his own, and, besides, he knew something of his hosts; and it was not without a feeling of devout thankfulness that, after he had been duly invested with the iron crown of Lombardy at Monza, he was enabled to take his departure, and get safe across the Apennines into Tuscany. Of course, when in Tuscany, he went to Pisa; and, of course, he was received with open arms. The old loyalty of that stanch Ghibelline republic shone forth as warmly towards him as towards his grandfather. He was invited to take up his abode within her precincts, and enjoy her hospitality till such time as he should go to Rome; and he was offered a present of ten thousand florins to defray the expenses of his coronation. Charles accepted this gift, though perhaps not without a little embarrassment, for the yoke of the Pisans was heavy upon poor unhappy Lucca; and her citizens, who had a kindly and affectionate recollection of his old connection with them, looked to him with confidence as the redresser of their wrongs. But they

looked in vain ; and Charles, obliged to choose between the conflicting passions and interests of two cities, whose only point of resemblance was their devotion to himself, acted prudently in abandoning Lucca to her fate, and preserving a rigid good faith in his dealings with Pisa. I am not quite sure that this praise of rigid good faith ought not to be a little modified, in consideration of his conduct in certain transactions which took place about this time in regard to the internal affairs of Pisa : but I waive this question, in order not to be unnecessarily long.

An emperor visiting Tuscany, taking up his abode at Pisa, and there receiving the homage of all the Ghibellines of the country, was naturally a more prominent than agreeable object in the eyes of the Florentines. They had not forgotten the fright and the trouble they had had from both his father and his grandfather ; and whether they took Horace's or Dante's view as to the probability of great *qualities* being transmitted from father to son, yet there was no doubt of the *traditions* in which he had been nursed, and still less that they would be fully kept alive where he was. So they were rather nervous, and took counsel with themselves and their Guelf allies as to what they should do ; for the Guelf league, which we have seen not strong enough to stand against Montreal, had been patched together again as soon as there was no longer any occasion for it, and was destined to be as useful as before. The Florentines therefore took counsel with their confederates as to their demeanour towards the Emperor. But, behold, the Perugians discovered that it was no concern of theirs ; for was not their city a fief of the Church, and what had they to do with the Empire ? It was the affair of Florence and Siena, and they would take no part in it. After this there was nothing to be said as far as they were concerned : but there was still Siena, and Siena had the same interests as their own, and, besides, had not behaved quite so badly as

Perugia in the Montreal business. With the commissioners of Siena, therefore, the Florentines consulted; and it was agreed between them that they should together send an embassy to wait upon the Emperor at Pisa. The tone of their discourse was to be respectful, but not servile: they were to give his majesty plenty of titles and praise, but they were to say nothing about obedience; and in asking for his protection, it was to be for the preservation of the independence and wellbeing of their commonwealths. This being satisfactorily settled, they started off together and got their audience. They were ushered into the presence-chamber, where sat his imperial majesty, surrounded by his court; and there, under the contemptuous frowns of the Germans, and the scowling glances of the Gherardescas, the Sismondi, and the lords of the hills, they had to deliver themselves as best they might. The Florentines spoke first. The sound of their own voices encouraged them, and they felt the satisfaction of knowing that they were not alone in the scrape: so they spoke out boldly the speech which had been concerted. Then came the Sienese; and, to the great horror of their allies, not only heaped upon the emperor a great superfluity of titles, but actually stated that they were commissioned to give him the signory of their city without conditions. Charles, who had all this while been whittling some pieces of wood, then delivered his answer. He was civil enough to both, particularly civil to the Sienese; and the Florentine envoys returned home to give an account of their mission, to abuse their allies for sneaking away from them, but to add that his majesty was a fair-spoken sort of gentleman, and perhaps things might not turn out after all to be as bad as they looked.

In this, however, they were disappointed. The Sienese rapturously applauded the conduct of their envoys at Pisa: Volterra and San Miniato hastened to follow their example in giving themselves up to the Emperor: Pistoia and

Arezzo made desperate attempts to do the same ; everywhere Ghibelline conspiracies were breaking out : the great Apennine feudatories flocked to Pisa at the head of their troops ; and Charles began to talk about the ban of the empire which had been laid upon Florence by his grandfather, and which had never been taken off. People thought of old times, and reflected how much they owed their escape from Henry the Seventh to pure luck ; and that they could not always expect their enemies to die so very conveniently as he had done.

Yet, after all, there was no great cause for alarm. Charles had declined far more from John of Bohemia than John of Bohemia had done from Henry ; and it soon transpired that all this formidable gathering, and all these big words, meant nothing beyond that the Emperor was poor, and wanted to be bought off. The Florentines in their first alarm had offered 50,000 florins as the price of peace : perhaps they, as well as the Ghibellines, expected this proposal to be met by an indignant refusal : but the answer they got was, that it was not enough, and that his majesty must have 100,000. A great deal of haggling followed ; and at last it was agreed that Charles should have what he wanted, and in return that he should give the Florentines not only full indemnity for their past misconduct, but also the imperial confirmation to all existing and all future laws of the republic, and confer upon their chief magistrates the title and rank of Imperial Vicars—besides some other concessions. The Florentine people thought their purchase dear at the price, and the Parliament made a good deal of difficulty about agreeing to the terms, but at last were persuaded to do so, and the Emperor, with the money in his pocket, went on to Siena.

I am afraid Siena has been playing a rather unworthy part in all these transactions ; and one is sorry for it, for one might have looked for better things from her. Her institutions are free, her territory extensive, her people brave

and warlike, her historical traditions not inglorious, and her capital adorned, as to a great extent it remains still, with buildings inferior to those of no other city in Italy, and which were and are a noble proof of the munificence and public spirit of her citizens. She had gradually, up to the end of the thirteenth century, been gaining upon Pisa as a Tuscan power ; and she would probably have supplanted that republic as leader of the Ghibellines, if the revolution which, about the same time as Giano della Bella's, produced the same effect upon her constitution as his did upon that of Florence, had not thrown her government into the hands of a restricted number of the wealthiest families of the commonalty. These families, or, as they were called, the *Monte* of Nine, gave an entirely new direction to the politics of their country ; and under their guidance the descendants of the victors of Monteperto became members of the Guelf confederation. I do not think that they need necessarily be blamed for this ; for, in spite of the example of Pisa, it was becoming more and more the rule that Guelfism should be the badge of liberty, and Ghibellinism of tyranny. But their rule was a bad rule. They kept the government entirely to themselves, shutting out both nobles and people ; and though the example of Venice showed that the existence of a privileged class was not intolerable to the Italians, yet they would not allow a class to be privileged for nothing. Now the Sieneſe may be said to have got nothing from their present oligarchy—at least no good : on the other hand they got plenty of harm, for the Nine were very insolent, very rapacious, and very oppressive. The consequence of this was, that they were hated by everybody ; and this again produced an effect upon them in leading to a timid, vacillating, hesitating policy, which did not venture upon a bold or energetic conduct abroad, for fear of its producing excitement or disapproval at home. They would not join the tyrants, because it might arouse indignation : they

would not act energetically in the cause of the republics, because it might stir up enthusiasm for liberty: they would not hire soldiers, because it was expensive: they would not arm the people, lest those arms should be used against themselves. It is no wonder that Siena has not behaved as might have been expected from her.

The people, it is true, were ready to ratify the bestowal of their signory upon the Emperor; and it might seem as if this fact implied that a slavish spirit pervaded all classes of the Sienese. But the truth was, that while the Nine wanted to make use of the Emperor's name to cover the maintenance of their authority over the people, the people wanted to make use of it to upset the Nine: and so it proved. While the magistrates were receiving Charles with great honour, and parading themselves as his friends, their enemies determined upon an outbreak. Three days after Charles's arrival, it burst out: the streets were barricaded, the bells were rung violently, the disgraced nobles, the Tolomei, the Salimbeni, the Piccolomini and others, marched in, armed to the teeth, at the head of their retainers: the crowded streets resounded with fierce cries of "Death to the Nine;" and the public palace was closely besieged. In their distress the government applied for protection to the Emperor. But Charles had no particular interest in securing their predominance, and while he did his best to save them from the popular fury, which in most cases he succeeded in doing, he forced them to lay down their offices, and resign the ensigns of magistracy into his hands. This done, and having got his own signory confirmed by the popular assembly, he nominated a commission to reform the government, and departed to be crowned by a papal legate in Rome. On his return he found that the constitution-doctors whom he had left had accomplished their task by the somewhat Irish expedient of taking power away from one class, in order to give it to another. No

words were bad enough to express their abhorrence of the Nine : all their acts were rescinded : their names were erased from all monuments ; and perpetual disability to hold office was denounced against them and all their class. And having done this, the Commissioners went one step down in the social scale, and formed a board of twelve members, to whom the government was intrusted, and who shortly became quite as exclusive as the Nine had been.

It is partly to put Siena a little less into the background than the Nine have hitherto kept her, and partly because constitutional revolutions are more important than the struggles of faction, that I have bestowed so much time upon Siena. The remainder of Charles's tour may be passed over lightly. He went back to Pisa, where he requited the hospitality of his hosts by abetting a sedition against them at Lucca, by setting two furious factions in Pisa itself by the ears, and by seizing and putting to death some of her most distinguished citizens—men to whom he was under the strongest obligations of gratitude—on a notoriously false accusation. He finally left for Germany, followed by the curses of all parties.

The war which was being waged in Lombardy is one of the most uninteresting on record. It is sufficient to say of the four families which composed the league of Venetia, that they were antagonists worthy of the Visconti. Both before and after the time of which we are now speaking they produced men who filled a large space in the history of their country, and who have deserved the gratitude of posterity ; but at the present moment they are principally remarkable for unnatural strife between their members. The ten or twelve years which include our present date are signalised by violent family disturbances in all of them. A pretender disputes by arms the rights of the present occupant of the throne of Ferrara ; a member of the house of La Scala takes advantage of the temporary absence of his

brother and chief to make an attempt to seize upon Verona : at Padua, Jacopino da Carrara is dethroned and kept in a dungeon by his nephew : at Mantua, Ugolino da Gonzaga is murdered by his brothers. There is as little to excite admiration in the conduct of the war as in the characters of those who waged it. The troops on both sides were mere mercenaries, and generally foreigners. The Great Company, which exercised a considerable influence over all the other bands of adventurers who were then roaming about Italy, was in the pay of the four lords ; and the Viscontine soldiers were unwilling to fight against it seriously. In return, it could not think of being so ungenerous as to take advantage of this kindly feeling on their part ; and the result was that they generally acted as if they had a tacit engagement to spare each other and cheat their employers. But this wretched war was saved from being utterly contemptible by an episode worthy of the best days of Italian freedom, and which showed that patriotism and self-devotion were not quite extinct even to the north of the Apennines, and that they might find an exponent and representative in a quarter where least they were to be expected.

It may be recollected that a long time ago, when Milan was the zealot of republicanism and the mainstay of Guelfism (can it be believed that she ever was such a thing?), the leader of the Ghibelline party was Pavia. In those days the spirit of freedom was not confined among that party to Pisa ; and the devotion of Pavia to the Emperor's cause was quite compatible with a jealous regard for her own independence. In the war with Frederick Barbarossa, when most of the other Ghibelline communities fell away by degrees from his side and joined the Lombard League, she almost alone remained true to him : but neither she nor he had the least idea of converting her loyalty into passive obedience. Since that time her power and consideration have declined : in the war of Frederick the Second her

part is perhaps less, certainly not more, conspicuous than that of Cremona ; and she can no longer claim to be looked upon as a rival to Milan. The flood of tyranny which we have seen so rapidly submerge all Lombardy at the end of the thirteenth century, has not spared her : but she has contrived to escape the further process by which all the others of that region have been thrown into the melting-pot, in order to be fused into the mass of Viscontine empire ; and though she has lost her liberty, she has succeeded in preserving her independence. The rulers are the Ghibelline family of Beccaria. They are not endowed with any extraordinary amount of capacity, and generally allow themselves to act in matters external under the guidance of their powerful neighbours at Milan : but at home their government has been well conducted and prosperous ; and Pavia acquiesces cheerfully in their rule, which enables them to hold a respectable though secondary place on the roll of sovereign states.

Nearer than any other independent territory to Pavia on the west, though divided by a broad strip which obeyed Galeazzo Visconti, lay the dominions of the Marquis of Montferrat. His family, constantly at feud with the Counts of Savoy, had taken for a very considerable time little or no part in the politics of Italy. But the present marquis determined to break through the practice of his house in this respect. He had some years back avoided all quarrel with the house of Savoy, whose chief at that time was a minor, by agreeing to submit any differences which might arise between them to the arbitration of Giovanni Visconti, who was then living ; so that he was free from anxiety in that quarter. After the Archbishop's death he maintained an alliance with the new lords of Milan ; and would have continued it had not his pride taken offence at an insult which was offered in their palace to some of his people. The Visconti refused all redress, and he determined to be revenged.

The Marquis of Montferrat was a thorough Italian : but the national character in him bore the impress of the region over which he ruled, and seemed rather to be nurtured among the healthy breezes of the Alps than to be stifled and enervated by the scirocco of the Lombard plain. He was brave, chivalrous, proud, and headstrong : he loved peace, but did not fear war ; and his craft and unscrupulousness, if they were such as would be condemned at the present day, were not considered blamable by a generation which looked back with fond regret to such men as the earlier Visconti and Can Grande della Scala. He followed the Emperor on his expedition through Italy ; and while at Rome, succeeded in obtaining from Charles a diploma constituting him Imperial Vicar in Piedmont, and as such entitling him to receive the obedience of all the towns in that province. Armed with these powers, he returned to his own country, and then began to take measures for claiming his rights. His first step was to secure the alliance of the Beccarias. The latter were not unnaturally charmed with so good an opportunity of weakening the terrible power which had loomed so long like a nightmare before their eyes : they agreed to the marquis's schemes ; and the new allies, joining themselves to the increasing confederacy of Venetia, threw off the mask, and poured their troops into Piedmont. Their appearance was hailed with joy by the populations. The rule of Galeazzo Visconti was cruel and rapacious, and the object of general detestation : that of the Marquis of Montferrat was gentle and popular ; and the Piedmontese, comparing the lot of his subjects with their own, were mad for a change. The suddenness of the attack left the Visconti no time to organise resistance : the armies of Pavia and Montferrat swept unchecked over the country : wherever they went their course was like a triumphal march : city after city tore down the Viper banner, drove out the Milanese garrison,

and opened their gates to the invaders : and a few months sufficed to transfer the realms which Luchino Visconti had, with so much trouble and so much crime, massed together, to the dominion of the lieutenant of the Empire.

Judge of the feelings of the Visconti. The hissings and contortions of the snake, as it disgorged its half-swallowed prey, must have been frightful : but, though baffled, the monster was not killed. The languid attacks on the other side did not engross its attention so entirely as to prevent it from turning upon its new enemies ; and, early in 1356, it gathered itself up for a spring, and fixed its poisonous teeth upon Pavia, which it rightly thought a weaker prey than Montferrat. The Beccarias do not seem to have fairly considered the importance of a war with Milan before embarking in it ; and when they found themselves attacked, they lost their heads, and showed so little spirit that the people became discouraged too ; and they would not improbably have succumbed with hardly a struggle had not the spirit of the olden time been suddenly reawakened in them by the heroism of one man. The monk Jacopo di Bussolari was one to whom posterity has done but scanty justice ; for most likely there are few people out of Italy who know much about him. But his is a character which outweighs, and deserves to outlive, a dozen of those of the Greek and Roman worthies with whom we are all so familiar. When still young he had abandoned the world to assume the habit of an Augustinian. In the fervour of his penitence and devotion he retired to live the life of a hermit in the wilderness ; and it was not until he received the commands of his superiors that he returned to Pavia, his native city. His sermons there (for it was as a preacher that he was employed) produced a wonderful effect. Nature had bestowed upon him a gift of eloquence, and the enthusiasm which, while a layman, he had brought to the study of the classics, had refined his taste and intelligence. The force of

his words was enhanced by the saintliness of his life, and his reputation spread far and wide. A still better consequence followed; for the corruption of manners which disgraced Pavia, as it did so many Lombard cities, was greatly diminished by his preaching and by his example: the people, charmed by the freedom with which he lashed the vices of the great, not sparing even the members of the dominant race, became fanatically attached to him; and even the chiefs of the Beccarias, who were alarmed lest the excesses of the younger members of their family should compromise their own popularity, gave him every encouragement. The reforms, however, which he desired and accomplished, though social, were not directly political.

But when war was at the gates—when the enemy seemed on the point of conquering—when the people were deserted or faintly served by their natural chiefs, and seemed about to be given over a helpless prey to the great power of Evil, it was impossible not to think of politics; and the preacher stood forth as a patriot. Roused at his call, Pavia sprang to arms. The hastily-levied militia of the town, drunk alike with the enthusiasm of religion and the enthusiasm of liberty, and led by one whom they looked upon as a messenger from Heaven, were more than a match for the disciplined indifference of the mercenaries of the Visconti. The towers of the besiegers were stormed one by one, and Bussolari did not lead home his followers till not a single foreign soldier profaned the territory. It may be imagined with what feelings the Pavesans regarded their deliverer. The hold which he had gained over them as a minister of religion was strengthened by a still deeper feeling of gratitude to him who had not only stood between them and a cruel and degrading tyranny, but had also aroused in their breasts a spirit of patriotism and warlike energy which might enable them to recall the memory of their ancestors without a blush; and he thereby gained the power to render to his

country another service, which at first probably he had never contemplated. On his return, the continuance of his denunciations against tyranny began to frighten the Beccarias. Conscious that he had done what they ought to have done and had not attempted to do, conscious also that he had entirely supplanted them in the hearts of their subjects, they hated him; and, with the cowardly hatred of tyrants, they conspired to have him assassinated. Their plots were foiled by the devotion of the citizens; and Bussolari, seeing that the time was ripe, determined that they should reign no longer. Their authority was a usurped one, and consequently illegal; and the Pavesans were fully entitled to call upon them to surrender it. But Fra Jacopo thought that the act should be done with every possible sanction; and accordingly, true to the old Ghibelline feeling of his country, he applied for permission to re-establish the republic to the Imperial Vicar, the Marquis of Montferrat. The latter at once agreed. Bussolari assembled the people, and addressed them from the pulpit. In an eloquent harangue he pointed out how unworthy the house of Beccaria had proved itself of the trust which it had been allowed to assume, and, dwelling on the blessings of the liberty which they had lost, exhorted them to restore the good estate as of old. His counsels were gladly followed. The republic was proclaimed; a government composed of the most distinguished of the citizens was appointed: a military organisation was given to the different quarters of the town: the Guelfs were recalled, and admitted to a share in political rights; and something like old times was restored again. No blood was shed, not even a sword was drawn in this blameless revolution. The Beccarias were of course deprived of power, but their persons were unharmed, their property left to them, and they were allowed to reside in their fortified palaces, which might to a jealous republican have seemed not only symbols, but instruments of tyranny. They were

far more irritated, however, at the loss of their sovereignty, than grateful for the impunity they enjoyed. Perhaps this was natural; and they only acted in accordance with the political morality of the age in conspiring against their country with the Visconti. Bussolari knew what they were doing, but he studiously preserved moderation towards them, only banishing one, the most guilty of the family, from the Pavesan territory; and it was not till all the fortresses of the Beccarias had been given over to the Milanese, and till a most formidable conspiracy, the last and worst of a series, to betray the city to the enemy, had been discovered and prevented, that he found it necessary to exile the whole race.

During this time Bernabo and Galeazzo had not been able to interfere, and the Pavesans had been allowed to carry through their reforms unchecked. They were, indeed, hardly pressed: if the Great Company would do little against them, their troops would do still less against the Great Company; and the throng of their enemies was increasing. The Bishop of Augsburg, whom Charles had left as his Imperial Vicar at Pisa, chafing at having nothing to do there, and anxious for war, launched the ban of the empire against the Visconti, and joined the camp of the allies. The Marquis of Montferrat hurried thither also to endeavour to quicken the zeal of the mercenaries, without slackening the efforts of his own troops in the west. The Milanese troops were shut up in the fortified towns, while the open country was occupied by their enemies; and even there they were not safe; for first Novara and then Como were captured by the Marquis; and when, issuing from their intrenchments, under the command of a veteran leader of the house of Visconti, they succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat on the army of the league, the advantage of it was neutralised by the news that Genoa had reclaimed her independence, and was fast driving the Milanese garrisons

out of Liguria. Fortune was going against them, and they resolved to treat. The Venetian allies were as desirous of peace as they were, and an accommodation was arranged by which, among other conditions, it was settled that Pavia should be free. But having stipulated this for form's sake, the Scalas, the Estes, and the other grandees were not likely to trouble themselves to see that the stipulation was carried out. The Visconti knew this perfectly well; and before the ink of the treaty was dry, another army of overwhelming force was on its march to Pavia.

But nothing that these lords of Milan ever did could be done without some baseness. They determined to see if they could not carry their objects by treachery; and the simplest plan would be to win over Bussolari. He was a literary man, and he was a religious man; and they tried to shake him by appealing to both these qualities. The superiors of the order to which he belonged were induced to send him their commands to leave off stirring up the people to resist the Visconti: this was disgraceful enough; but there was a deeper disgrace yet; for Petrarch—the admirer of classical antiquity, the Florentine republican, the lover of liberty, as I called him some time back, and feel half inclined to scratch it out—humbled himself so far as to write at their bidding a long letter to Bussolari, full of his insufferable rodomontade about the miseries of war and the blessings of peace, and exhorting him to yield.

But neither for priest nor pedant would Bussolari shrink from the noble task which he had undertaken, or desert his confiding countrymen in their distress. There was nothing for it but war; and war there was with a vengeance. The Viscontine army poured into the Pavesan territory in such force that it was hopeless to resist: the country people, less enthusiastic for freedom than those of the town, and in many places under the influence of the Beccarias, succumbed generally without a blow: the fortresses were one

after another captured or betrayed ; and the lines were drawn closer and closer round the devoted city. The Pavesans faced their fate without flinching. The women laid aside their costly dresses, clothed themselves in coarse black stuff, and gave up their jewels to the state to aid in providing for the defence ; and every citizen was under arms. The Marquis of Montferrat, who alone of the late confederates remained at war with Milan, made vigorous attempts to succour them : but the blockade, for such it became, grew straiter and straiter : some troops were indeed thrown in by him to aid in the defence ; but to do so became more and more difficult every day ; and, finally, the Great Company, which he took into his pay, betrayed him shamefully, and deserted to the enemy, leaving him with hardly means to defend himself. At the same time a frightful epidemic broke out at Pavia : the citizens, worn down by famine, were swept away by thousands ; and Bussolari saw that there was no longer any hope. He accordingly offered to surrender upon honourable terms, demanding that though the sovereignty should be with the Visconti, yet that the municipal government should be preserved, and that the Guelfs should retain the rights to which they had been restored. But in all these conditions there was not one thought of himself, nor one word of his own safety ; and when Galeazzo Visconti accepted the conditions, the man who had proposed them was completely in his power. The same obliging ecclesiastical dignitaries who had before done as they were bid in ordering him to surrender the Pavesans, were equally ready to punish him for not doing so ; and Galeazzo gave him into their hands. He was thrown by them into a dungeon, from whence he never emerged : whether he was there done to death by their ministers, or by a more cruel fate suffered to languish out the rest of his life, I know not : but he appears no more upon the historical stage. He left behind him the enthusi-

astic love and passionate regrets of his countrymen, and to posterity a name which stands out brilliantly from amidst the degradation of the times ; and if renovated Italy should ever dedicate a temple to the memory of those who in former ages have sacrificed themselves in order to stay for a moment the misery which has always till now appeared to be her doom, his statue will hold as prominent a place as those of Rienzi, of Porcaro, of Machiavelli, and of Ferrucci.

To those who are at all interested by the history of this remarkable man, it may be some consolation to know that his unselfish disregard of his own safety in the terms which he made with the Visconti, was not the cause of his fate ; for it would have been the same in any case. Hardly had Galeazzo got possession of the city, when he claimed, in his capacity of Imperial Vicar in Lombardy, to override the stipulations which he and his brother had agreed to be bound by as lords of Milan ; and he announced that he did not mean to keep to them. He was as good as his word this time. The Guelfs were at once ordered to leave the city, and the old disabilities against them renewed ; and instead of the municipal institutions which had been promised, he sent his own governors to rule in Pavia. As if to mock the citizens with their hopes, and to punish them for having dared to entertain them, the new government distinguished itself beyond anything that had ever been known by the outrageousness of its cruelty ; and the Visconti particularly prided themselves on their invention, for the special benefit of their new subjects, of a system of tortures, by which the victim was kept in a state of prolonged agony for forty days, and on the forty-first, after the executioner had had plenty of sport out of him, finished his sufferings by having his limbs broken on the wheel.

Although I do not think it necessary or desirable to bestow as much time and detail upon other contemporary events as I have upon those which I have just narrated, it is not

because the rest of Italy was quiet at this time. As far back as the time that Rienzi was released from his dungeon at Avignon and sent to resume the government of Rome, in the people's name as he thought, in the Pope's as his Holiness thought, the latter made an attempt to carry out the old project of conquering the territories of which his predecessors had acquired the suzerainty. The task was confided to one of those eminent men who have from time to time arisen to prove that a priest may be distinguished in mundane affairs, and that the cardinal's purple need not always be a badge of luxury and sloth—Egidio Albornoz. He was sent to Italy at the head of an army ; and, after overthrowing, without much difficulty, the petty tyrants who ruled the country to the west of the Apennines, and reducing the whole of that region to obedience to St Peter, proceeded to cross the range to do the same by Comarca and Romagna. The character of the lords of Romagna is generally as far inferior to those of their Lombard compeers as their territories are smaller ; but it is not so at this moment. While the war in that region was such as we have seen it—one in which the people were ransacked and maltreated, and only the soldiers were safe—Albornoz found himself opposed to a race of brave and able chiefs, who could not only make alliances, but conduct campaigns, and who could find their soldiers among their own subjects. Three men stood forth from the rest, Visconti of Oleggio, viceroy and afterwards lord of Bologna ; Malatesta, lord of Rimini ; and Francesco degl' Ordelaffi, lord of Forlì and Cesena. The first of these, it is true, was too much engaged elsewhere to pay much attention to the legate's approach, except in the way of civility ; but the others determined to oppose him. A league, presided over by the Malatesta, was formed for their mutual defence and common safety among almost all the lords of the district : their operations were conducted with ability, and at first

with success ; but Albornoſ was too much for them. Malateſta, defeated and humbled, ſurrendered ſome of his territories, and agreed to hold the reſt as a tributary. Mogliano, lord of Fermo, was driven out by a revolt of his own ſubjects ; and Ordelaſſi, after a long and vigorous reſiſtance, in which the defence of Ceſena by his wife, Marzia degl' Uballini, was even more heroic than his own at Forlì, but which only ſerved to protract his inevitable fall, was obliged to give up everything, and retire to die in poverty at Venice. If it were not for the purpoſe of avoiding too much detail, I ſhould be inclined to give ſome account of Marzia's conduct at Ceſena, which is a very noteworthy piece of hiſtory : but though it ranks above the defence of Pavia in a military point of view, it has not the intereſt which attaches to the latter on other grounds, ſo it will be enough to mention it and paſs it by.

Almoſt all the Donation of Conſtantine had been conquered or rendered tributary : but two conſiderable ſtates remained—Ferrara and Bologna. Againſt the former, indeed, it does not ſeem to have occurred to Albornoſ to attempt anything ; and the valour and ability of the man who had made himſelf tyrant of the latter ſeemed to make its reduction even more hopeleſs. But the lord of Bologna was in difficulties. Ever ſince the peace of 1358, he had been ſcrupulous to obſerve the ſtricteſt reſpect for it, ſo as to avoid all quarrel with his dangerous kiſmen : he had even ſought to conciliate their favour by ſending them troops to fight againſt his old ally of Montferrat : but he had no right (if there could be any queſtion of right at all among them) to expect their forgiveness : he could not even look to be treated with the fairneſs due from an enemy ; and he need not have been ſurpriſed when they bribed the ſoldiers whom he had ſent to their aſſiſtance, to deſert his ſervice and enter theirs, and followed up this piece of treachery by a ſudden attack upon his dominions without declaring

war. Weakened by the loss of so large a part of his forces, he could not keep the field : he had no allies, at least none that would do anything for him : and, detested by his subjects, he saw that he was on the point of falling into the hands of an enemy who could not punish him more severely than by abandoning him to their tender mercies. Albornoſ saw his opportunity : he propoſed to Giovanni that he ſhould give up his ſignory into the hands of the Church, receiving of courſe due compensation ; and finally this was agreed to. He of Oleggio received the marquiſate of Fermo for his life, and the banner of the keys was hoisted over Bologna. This of courſe produced war with the Viſconti of Milan ; but we need follow Albornoſ and his new enemies no further, and, as Dante and Virgil did to Calcabrina and Alichino, “*lasciamo lor coſi impicciati.*”

It might have been thought that the wars of the tyrants would have been taken advantage of by the partisans of liberty for the purpoſe of consolidating their ſtrength and doing ſomething to recover their loſt ground. But it was not ſo. Tuscany was filled with wars and rumours of wars. Two factions, originating in a family quarrel among the Gherardescas, and retorting upon one another the nicknames of Bergolini and Raspanti, the equivalents of which in the vernacular Anglo-Saxon would be the Muſſs and the Grabbers, were fighting one another at Piſa : the former, who were by far the moſt reſpectable of the two, had for the time been proſtrated by the treacherous cruelty of the Emperor ; and the latter, who had now got the ſtate into their own hands, were trying to make a little popularity for themſelves by getting up a war with Florence. Florence met their attempts by a dignified contempt ; and when the Raspanti, in defiance of treaties, took away the commercial franchises which her merchants enjoyed in their city, ſhe quietly removed all her mercantile eſtabliſhments to another port, which the Sieneſe, anxious to make amends for

the misconduct of the Nine, made over to her. Almost all the commerce of Pisa went with them ; and the Raspanti, furious at being baffled, tried by a series of fresh provocations to force on an appeal to arms. That they did not succeed, at least at first, was perhaps owing in some measure to the fact that Florence was herself divided by internal disagreements ; and the other two members of the Guelf League were at war. A very dull war it was, this between Siena and Perugia ; but one incident of it deserves a passing notice.

The Sienese took our old friends the Great Company into their pay. In order to get to their fighting ground, they asked leave from the Florentines to pass through their territory. This was refused, and a route was traced by which they could reach the Perugian territory without descending into the plain ; and the Great Company started, taking with it four Florentine commissioners as hostages for the good faith of their countrymen. The habits of these mercenaries were not such as to make their passage a pleasure to the people on their line of march. They burnt and pillaged the villages on their road ; and the inhabitants, the mountaineers of the Apennines, who had both more spirit than the down-trodden dwellers of the low country, and more natural facilities of ground for defending themselves, resolved to pay them off. The road at one place in its course ran along a narrow passage, overhung by huge precipices, and closed in at the further end by the high and steep ascent of Scadella, up which it wound painfully ; and here the peasants awaited their approach. The vanguard was allowed to pass unharmed : but as the main body began to ascend from the bottom of the ravine, a few country people appeared before them at the top, and rolled some enormous stones upon them down the incline ; and this was the signal for a general attack. All down the glen the tops of the precipices seemed alive with enemies :

rocks, detached from the heights, came crashing down the cliffs one after another : the soldiers were hemmed in, unable to advance up the blockaded heights or to retreat against their comrades pressing on behind ; and they were dashed to pieces without a chance of striking a blow. Count Lando, their leader, preserved his coolness amidst the uproar, and tried to save his army by detaching bodies of light-armed infantry to scale and clear the heights : but the precipices were too steep, and they were driven back in disorder ; and the assailants, taking courage, hurried down, and, standing above the soldiers just at spear's length, struck them down and thrust them through with poles and stakes. The commander of the rearguard was dashed into the torrent below with his horse, a lifeless mass : and Lando, wounded, and hopeless of escape, surrendered himself prisoner, while his troops, flinging away their arms, made the best of their way out of the gorge, and fled in all directions. Few indeed escaped, for the pursuit was hot, and of those who were not butchered, the majority were taken captives. The vanguard alone remained ; and its position was very dangerous ; for the Apennine feudatories shared in the general hatred of the Company and longed to extirpate it ; and the Florentines, in spite of their treaty, seem to have looked on these mercenaries like a pack of wolves, whom it was fair to knock on the head whenever opportunity served. The fears of the commissioners, however, gave the Company a safeguard which it would never have had from the scruples of their countrymen. As the Florentine armies were closing in, they began to feel that their own lives were not safe : so they sent orders to them to advance no further ; and these orders were reluctantly obeyed. The remnant of Montreal's army made its escape out of the country, humbled, but not destroyed, to repair its losses by fresh levies, and to vow vengeance against Florence.

No long time sufficed for the former object. Marching

down from the hills where they suffered this terrible check, they swept into the territory of Forlì, where Ordelaffi was still holding out. The forces of the Church, not at that time commanded by Alborno, gave way before them ; and so rapidly were their numbers swelled, and so formidable an appearance did they present, that Alborno, when in the following year (1359) he resumed the command, found it necessary to apply to the Florentines for assistance against them. The Florentines readily entered into an alliance with him, and sent an army to his support. But their fate was what it had so often been before. Alborno took advantage of their good faith for his own purposes : without consulting them, he made a treaty of peace with the Company for four years, in consideration of a large sum of money, of which the Church was to find about one-third, and they were to find the rest ; and when they demurred to this, he made his own separate bargain, and left his allies to shift as best they could. Flushed with success and enriched by their treaty, the Great Company turned upon its remaining enemy. The passes which lay between were in the hands of the Perugians ; and the Perugians, besides their old ties of alliance, were under a special obligation to Florence for having brought to an end the Sienese war by mediating an accommodation honourable to both parties. But not even the example of Scadella sufficed to enable them to shake off the terror with which the Company seems to have inspired them. They left the passes open, as they had done before ; and Lando and his army of freebooters, burning alike for plunder and for revenge, came pouring over the crest of the Apennines and down their western slope into the valleys of Tuscany.

But Florence had by this time recovered from her torpor. Her ancient courage revived in presence of danger : she enrolled troops, gave the command of them to Pandolfo Malatesta, of the house of Rimini, and awaited the attack,

not this time under her walls, but on the outskirts of her territory. Not a house should be touched, not a head of cattle lifted, by these marauders ; so she said, and she kept her word. The Company, daunted by the resolute aspect of their opponents, fell back before them, and then, making a flank march, attempted to pass at another point : but wherever they turned, Malatesta was there before them, and always in a position too well chosen to be safely attacked ; and this over and over again till they had gone nearly the whole circuit. At last they sent a bragging message of defiance, challenging their enemies to meet them in the field. Malatesta gladly accepted it : day and place were appointed : but as the time drew near, the hearts of the braggarts failed them ; and instead of appearing, they slunk away into the territory of Lucca. The prestige which had hitherto attended them, and which had not been broken even by the rout of Scadella, was completely destroyed by this humiliation ; and the Florentines might congratulate themselves that their firmness had not only insured their own safety, but had given to the rest of Italy the lesson that these formidable companies of adventurers were only dangerous to those who were afraid of them. The Great Company fell to pieces : a small fragment remaining under the orders of Count Lando, and, still calling itself by that once-dreaded name, went on to Lombardy, where it entered the service of the Marquis of Montferrat, and betrayed and deserted him, as we have seen ; and this exploit, well worthy of the past career of this great gang of robbers, is, I believe, the last event of its history. I confess to a sneaking kindness for Montreal, principally, I believe, owing to Bulwer's novel of 'Rienzi ;' but I do not feel called upon to extend that feeling to Count Lando and Anichino Baumgarten, and am truly glad to get rid of them, and the Company to boot.

Florence, however, was not destined to remain long at peace. A conspiracy at Pisa against the Raspanti quick-

ened the desire of that party to smother their own unpopularity under a war; and their late success had aroused in the Florentines a spirit keenly sensitive to their national honour. For three years these feelings prevailed in both cities without giving rise to actual hostilities; for neither wished to be the first to begin, and in the affronts and provocations which they reciprocally offered they were careful to keep within the letter of the law. But at length, in 1362, a pugnacious gonfalonier succeeded in persuading the Florentines that the insolence of Pisa must be forcibly restrained: they sent an army to support the resistance of a fortress which, by their underhand instigation, a captain of mercenaries had surprised in their rival's territory: and though this expedition failed in its object, it effected another which, perhaps, was desired more; for it overcame the lingering scruples of the pacific party in their own city, and committed both republics to war.

The Florentines were the more powerful of the two belligerents; and the ancient martial superiority of the Pisans was neutralised by the practice which then prevailed of employing mercenaries; so that it seemed as though the war could not last long. The Pisans, defeated and half ruined, applied for assistance to Bernabo Visconti, the chief of the Ghibellines: but he had both his hands full; for the Marquis of Montferrat was on one side, and the Legate Albornoz on the other, and he could not afford to support a war in Tuscany also. He interposed, however, his good offices on behalf of the Pisans, so as to procure them the assistance of the "White Company," a formidable body of men, who had lately crossed the Alps to take service with Montferrat, and who, becoming the terror of Italy as they had been of France, first made Southern Europe familiar with the prowess of the English. The audacity which these new-comers displayed astonished and rather frightened the Italians, who could not quite understand their

winter campaigns, their forced marches through the deep snow, the careless contempt with which they walked over the strongest barricades. By their assistance the Pisans became masters of the open country, shut their enemies up in their strongholds, ravaged their territory from end to end, and, pushing their outposts up to the very gates of Florence, held games and ran races, with every sort of contemptuous demonstration, within sight of the walls. The Florentines, besides, were not happy in their generals. Pandolfo Malatesta, who commanded them at one period, having displayed one side of his national and hereditary character in his able and successful campaign against the Great Company, now favoured them with the other, by purposely mismanaging their affairs and weakening their forces, in the hope of inducing them, in their despair, to make him their lord; and it reflects some credit upon them, I think, that, more mindful of his old services than he showed himself of the honours and rewards which he had received in consequence of them, they only punished his treachery and ingratitude by civilly dismissing him from their employment, while, in order to let him down easily, they shortly afterwards appointed to his office his relative, Galeotto. Galeotto Malatesta, like his nephew, was a man of high military reputation: but whether through ill-luck, or, more probably, through ill-faith, he did no better; and it may seem strange that the fortunes of the war were not more completely reversed than they were. Yet they were *not* much reversed. While the Pisans and the English found no enemies to meet them in the field, they were almost invariably repulsed in their attempts to take fortified places; and as long as this went on, they could not make much progress. At last they got a chance of battle. The Florentine army was at a place called Cascina, near the Arno, and Hawkwood, the English commander, thought he saw a hope of surprising them. Nothing could have been more

opportune. The day was excessively hot, and the Florentine soldiers, thinking no evil, had left the camp and were bathing in the river ; and Galeotto was asleep, or something—and, at any rate, had been so annoyed by constant alarms of false attacks, which Hawkwood had taken care to make, that he had given orders that he should be disturbed no more, so that the assailants came up quite unexpectedly. But a native Florentine officer, Manno Donati, had done his best to make up for the negligence of his chief by keeping the troops under his command on the alert. On the first alarm they were ready for action, and, advancing to the barricades, they met the English with a courage equal to their own. The cry that the enemy was upon them startled their companions from their bath : they hurried on their armour and flocked to the scene of action as fast as they could ; and Donati, finding there were enough to defend the barricades, flung open the gates, and at the head of a troop of cavalry charged the English on one flank, while the other was harassed by a body of crossbowmen, exiles from Genoa. Attacked on every side, staggered by the unexpected vigour of the resistance, and wearied by their hot march and the weight of their armour, the English began to give way ; and Hawkwood, instead of sending fresh troops to their support, allowed them to be broken and cut to pieces, while the rest of his army retired to Pisa.

I should have had no excuse for saying so much about this battle, but that it was made the subject of Michael Angelo's great fresco in the hall of the Palazzo Vecchio, when he and Leonardo da Vinci painted at the same time, and were pitted against one another. It is now destroyed, as is also Leonardo's ; but it has been engraved, and it has been, besides, the subject of an allusion, if not description, in Rogers's '*Italy*.'

The Pisans now became anxious for peace, and finding their adversaries equally so, negotiations were set on foot

with the view of bringing it about. But this by no means was suited to the views of the Visconti. They had been very glad to see a Guelf republic engaged in a damaging warfare, and if, at the same time, a Ghibelline republic was damaged too, there was no great harm in that ; and they were much annoyed that this profitable state of things should seem likely to come to an end. They pictured to themselves cordiality restored between the two, the Raspanti driven from office, the more moderate Bergolini recalled to the head of affairs, close alliance with Florence, perhaps even Guelf principles prevailing, and Pisa belonging to the Lombard League. They determined to prevent this ; and no means seemed so likely to promote this end as to give Pisa a tyrant. There was at that time residing at their court, as ambassador of the Pisan republic, one Giovanni Agnello, a man of great wealth and no very respectable character ; and upon him they pitched as the person to carry out their design. Agnello's vanity was excited when the project was laid before him, and he entered into it greedily. On his return to Pisa he lost no opportunity of pointing out to the rulers of the city the advantages which they would derive from intrusting the management of the war to a dictator. This was done craftily enough, so as to prevent his real object from being detected ; but at length his pertinacity excited suspicion, and the government ordered his house to be searched. Agnello, however, had been forewarned. When the officers came, there was nothing which bore the smallest appearance of treason ; and when they entered his sleeping-room (it was the middle of the night) his wife met them, saying that he was reposing after his labours in the service of his country, and begging to know if they required him further. They retired upon this in some confusion ; and Agnello, as soon as their backs were turned, sprang up, mustered his confederates, marched to the palace of the Signoria, and took possession of it. The

magistrates were arrested one by one in their beds and brought before him: threats and promises were lavished upon them alternately; and at length they all succumbed and swore fidelity. Next day he paraded the streets in state with them in his train, and accompanied by Hawkwood and his mercenaries, who had been bribed by the Visconti: the people, cowed by the defection of their leaders, and conscious of inability to resist the well-trained and veteran soldiers of England, looked on in gloomy acquiescence; and Agnello was installed as Doge of Pisa.

The negotiations for peace had been going briskly on all the while; and so strong was the feeling in favour of it that Agnello did not care, or did not venture, to interrupt them. They at length concluded in a treaty, which, without humiliating Pisa very much, left all the advantages on the side of Florence. But though the tyrants of Milan had failed in prolonging the war, they had gained what was of still greater advantage to them: for their intrigues had caused despotism to reappear in the region of freedom—a despotism not independent, as those of Castruccio and Walter de Brienne had been, but bearing more the character of a satrapy of their own; and its seat and centre was the city which had stood alone among the Ghibellines as jealous of freedom, and which had often, in the day of her wrath, spurned before her those who attempted to violate it, even though distinguished by all the qualities which mark the soldier and the statesman—the gallant republic of Pisa.

This was in 1364. These details are rather weary work to write, and probably quite as weary to read. Unless one can bear constantly in mind the great principles which are underlying the relations of the different states one with another, there is something very petty about all these conflicts; and, in spite of one's self, one can hardly help feeling some sort of contempt for the whole of them. The war of Pavia is something like coming upon a fine bit of landscape

on a journey through a dull country ; and to English people Hawkwood and his White Company are not without interest. I think I do not grudge the Italians their successes against our countrymen : in fact, I am rather glad to have so much reason to respect them, as the conquerors of the soldiers of Auberoche and Cressy ; but still it is disheartening to see them going down the hill as they seem to be doing ; and when one is obliged to say that Pisa submitted to the yoke of a tyrant, and such a tyrant as Agnello, one is inclined to throw one's pen down and have no more to do with them.

Four years after, the year 1364 was marked by the simultaneous appearance on the stage of the chiefs of both the Guelf and Ghibelline parties. The Popes seemed to have made up their minds that Avignon was henceforth to be their abode. They were invariably Frenchmen, and naturally preferred living in France to living anywhere else ; and, besides that, Avignon was much pleasanter than Rome. It was a charming city, in a salubrious site, in the delicious climate of Provence, with no malaria, no turbulent mobs, no quarrelsome barons ; and if it did not make their position quite so conspicuous, perhaps that was just as well, for their habits, and those of their court, were such that the less they were talked about the better, and there was only too much scandal respecting them already. It is true that they had to purchase these advantages by complete subservience to the King of France, and by the diminution of their influence upon Europe in general, and Italy in particular. But what mattered that ? It was not very dignified perhaps, but it was very comfortable ; and their Holinesses and their Eminences were men of sense, and had seen enough of the world to know that it was a great mistake to purchase dignity by the sacrifice of comfort. But out of doors the cry waxed louder and louder that the interests of the Church and of religion were being sacrificed by these negli-

gent shepherds to their own interests and their own pleasures ; that the court of the Popes was a sink of iniquity and corruption, and they themselves fit to be its presidents ; and that this should be so no longer. Above all, the Italians were indignant at an absenteeism which not only deprived Rome of her bishop, but also deprived her, and with her in its degree the rest of the country, of the honours and advantages belonging to the capital of Christendom ; and their wrath was doubtless not abated by the sedulous efforts which all this time the Popes were continually making to found for themselves a temporal empire in the country, the spiritual interests of which they treated with such supreme unconcern. Petrarch, who held such a position in the eyes of the world as almost to make him a European power, took up this cry, and lent to it the whole force of his great name and highly reputed eloquence. And more than all, the English companies of adventurers whom the peace of Bretigni had let loose, began to make it apparent that Provence was not such a paradise of security as they had deemed it. Such a hive of wealth and luxury, with none to defend it save a quantity of slothful and unwarlike churchmen, was not likely to escape their attention. The Popes had more than once to pay down an enormous ransom in order to buy them off, and escape having the place sacked ; and it began to be doubted whether, after all, Rome might not be the safer place of the two.

Such were the motives which determined Pope Urban the Fifth, who succeeded to the Papal Chair in 1362, to take an early opportunity of declaring his intention of returning to his proper see. The new Pontiff was a good deal superior to his immediate predecessors. There is a portrait of him by Simon of Bologna in the Pinacoteca of that city ; and one cannot look at it without being impressed with the idea that its subject must have been no common character. In the high and broad forehead, in the

deep and closely-set eyes, in the massy jaw, compressed lips, and strongly marked lines of the mouth, one fancies that one can read ability, penetration, and resolution, and that one cannot think that their possessor was a covetous or dishonest man ; and though physiognomy is often very deceptive, in this case I do not think that it is so. His purpose was strongly opposed in every possible way by the dignitaries, great and small, of his court, and they contrived to keep it in abeyance for five years ; but at the end of that time he determined to wait no longer, and they were obliged to follow him whether they liked it or not. He was thinking, no doubt, as much of his temporal views as of his spiritual duties when he did this, perhaps more : but his temporal views were such as he need not have been ashamed of. He was to meet the Emperor in Rome ; and there the two great chiefs of Western Europe, whose predecessors had so long divided and shaken Christendom to its centre by their opposing pretensions, were to lay aside all thought of their ancient feuds, and co-operate together in working out the designs of Heaven, and promoting the welfare of mankind. Much was to be done by them : but what was impossible to the united strength of the successors of Cæsar and of St Peter ? Italy was to be pacified. The tyranny of the petty princes who had usurped dominion in the Patrimony of the Church, was to be superseded by the beneficent and paternal sway of the Popes : the companies of adventurers, German, English, French, Italian, the Great Company, the White Company, the Company of the Star, the Company of St George, who had so long preyed upon the vitals of the land, were to be extirpated root and branch : the great wicked power which lowered in the north of Italy, which neither feared God nor regarded man, was to be broken down, or at least confined within due limits ; and when Italy had been freed from her oppressors by their joint efforts, they were to turn their attention to the East,

and listening to the cries of their brethren who were suffering under the yoke of the Turks, to organise a fresh expedition for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre.

A league against the house of Visconti was organised by the strenuous efforts of the Pope. It consisted of himself, the Emperor, the King of Hungary, and all the great East Lombard families except the Scalas. The new confederacy was far more powerful than the former one had been. Its prestige was far higher, its territories were far wider, and it counted among its ranks at least one man of genius, the Legate Albornoz. And when it was recollected how hardly the lords of Milan had been put to it ten years ago, it might well seem as if they would be incapable of resistance now.

But the alliance of Pope and Emperor, though it had a very imposing sound, did not imply anything approaching to the power which it would once have implied. It was a fine subject for a picture to represent these two great potentates sitting side by side, as incarnations of the two aspects of the Divine order upon earth, as Simone Memmi did in the Spanish chapel of Sta Maria Novella at Florence ; but, practically, they were looked upon as two foreigners, interfering for purposes of their own in the affairs of Italy. The one was a French churchman from Avignon, who had contrived by means more or less honourable to scrape together a largish territory in Central Italy, where his government was universally detested. The other was in theory Emperor of Rome and King of the Lombards and Germans, but really was very little more than King of Bohemia ; and his influence over the rest of the realm of the Cæsars amounted to very little more than the power of doing mischief enough to make himself odious, without being enough to save him from being contemptible. Nor were their personal qualities enough to make up for the diminution of their positions. Urban, indeed, as I have said, was not a man to be despised ; and had he lived in the thirteenth

century he would probably have been, after Gregory the Tenth, the most respectable of the series : but he was not a Hildebrand, and nothing short of a Hildebrand could have restored the Church at this period. We have seen something of Charles, and I think know enough not to feel for him much respect. A co-operation between Innocent the Fourth and Frederick the Second might have pacified the world : the co-operation of Urban the Fifth and Charles the Fourth accomplished nothing.

Hardly had the Pope set foot in Italy in 1367, when he was deprived of the services of the great man who had conquered or rendered tributary so large a portion of the Patrimony, and whose talents might have been expected to be of such avail in the war which was about to commence. The inconsistency of the characters of the priest and the soldier was not as much thought of then as it would be now ; and Albornoz was personally popular even with those whom he had conquered, and to whom his rule appeared mild and gentle as compared with those of the papal legates who had been before him, and who came after him. Just before his death he had succeeded in securing the adhesion to the anti-Viscontine alliance of the lords of Mantua, Ferrara, and Padua ; and he might, could he have had confidence in their fidelity and perseverance, have felt upon his deathbed that his work was done.

Charles entered Italy in 1368 at the head of an army strong enough to have made a considerable impression upon the enemy. He had, I suppose, learned from his former expedition that the name of Cæsar was not enough to secure respect without some show of physical force to back it ; and his conduct looked as if respect, and still more the pecuniary value of respect, was all he wanted. For form's sake he joined the Marquis of Este during part of a campaign : but he very soon tired of this, for nothing was to be got in that quarter without fighting for it ; and having ruined his

allies and done little harm to his enemies, he dismissed the greater part of his troops, and followed his greedy instincts across the Apennines, in the hope of feeding on the flesh-pots of Tuscany.

As on his first visit to that district, he paid his first visit to the Pisans ; not, however, at their capital this time, but at their subject city of Lucca. In spite of their Ghibellinism the Pisans were by no means as anxious for the honour of an Imperial visit as they had formerly been ; for it was a very expensive one, and they were never secure against his playing them false about Lucca : in fact, his attention had notoriously been a good deal directed to that city of late. Agnello, on his part, had his own objections to seeing Charles ; for the appearance of an Emperor was generally attended with some disturbance, and he was as nervously afraid of disturbance as an Austrian viceroy or a modern Pope. He determined, however, to make the best of what he could not prevent. If the Emperor would confer upon him the title of Imperial Vicar, it would not only confirm, by supplying a basis for, his power, but also give to himself a little more respectability than he had at present ; for, while the republics detested him as a usurper, the tyrants looked down upon him as a low-born upstart. Charles might, perhaps, be inclined to do this, if it was made worth his while ; and Agnello consented, for this purpose, to commit an act of treachery towards his country, not the less odious because a good result incidentally followed from it, by surrendering Lucca into the hands of the Imperial Commissioner. In return for this sacrifice, the Emperor agreed to bestow upon him the coveted dignity ; and so he probably would have done, had not the scaffolding upon which Agnello mounted, for the purpose of making the ceremony as conspicuous as possible, suddenly happened to give way, and precipitated those who were upon it into the Piazza beneath. Agnello escaped with life ; but his leg was broken

by the fall; and, on the news that their tyrant was confined to a sickbed, the people of Pisa seized their arms, forced the public palace, drove out the ducal guards, and re-established the republic. Probably most of their leading men thought that the recovery of their freedom was worth purchasing by the loss of Lucca; but there must have been sore hearts among them for all that. Its conquest had been one of the events in their history of which they had most right to be proud; for it was a memorial of the valour in battle which had won it and kept it against an enemy as resolute as, and far more wealthy and powerful than, themselves, while the territory belonging to it was nearly as large as that which remained to them; and to lose it by the selfish treachery of their own chief magistrate, and the still more selfish ingratitude of the man for whom they had made such great sacrifices, and for whose family they had in former days staked the very existence of their commonwealth, must have been a bitter lesson against putting their trust in princes.

Charles went on to Siena. There, since his last visit, another revolution had taken place. The Monte of Twelve had proved, as might have been expected, as exclusive as the Nine had been, and were proportionally hated. Above all, the old nobles, long excluded from power, and foiled in their hopes of recovering their share of it by the recent arrangements, probably, too, subjected to a good deal of insult and persecution, were bitterly hostile to the government; and no better means of meeting the difficulty occurred to the latter than to set them together by the ears. They revived the old Guelf and Ghibelline party-watchwords, pretended to get up cabals among themselves for them, and encouraged the nobles to do the same, hoping that if they could succeed in persuading them to set to work fighting one another, there would be no further trouble from them. But they overreached themselves. The chiefs of the nobility were

not long in discovering the design, and resolved to make use of it against its authors. Pretending to fall into the views of their respective partisans in the government, the heads of the Guelf and Ghibelline parties called in their numerous vassals from the country, and made preparations as though to attack each other. The factions mustered in the quarters which respectively belonged to their chiefs, without the least opposition from the delighted government, and it seemed as though a bloody fight was at hand, when they suddenly joined together, and, with an army of 8000 strong, and swelled by malcontents of all grades, marched upon the public palace, and called upon the Twelve to lay down their offices. Resistance was out of the question. The Twelve, glad to escape without personal injury, yielded up the government into the hands of the nobles. The old consular government of ancient times was restored by their conquerors: the discarded order of the Nine was admitted to a share in it; and Tuscany beheld with astonishment, after an interval of seventy years of proscription, the restoration of an aristocracy of birth to the authority which it enjoyed nowhere else but at Venice.

The approach of the Emperor appeared to offer to the defeated party a chance of recovering their lost power, and they earnestly implored his intervention. The dominant nobles made a great show of agreeing to this, but knowing the man they had to deal with, they refused to admit his troops without making some sort of stipulation about his conduct after he got in. This difficulty was got over by the treachery of one of the consuls, whose family, the Salimbeni, were the hereditary leaders of the Ghibellines, and were therefore disposed to exaggerate the rights of the empire, and who also were in closer relations with the popular party, and the late government of the Twelve, than any of their compeers. The Imperial Vicar, one of the Malatestas, who was surnamed the Hungarian, was introduced into the town

at the head of 800 men-at-arms. The nobles, though taken at a disadvantage, fought desperately; and it was not till every defensible position had been carried, one by one, that they lost all hope of preserving their dominion, and retired into the country, where at least they could insure their independence. A fresh constitution was immediately framed. This time it was a liberal one. The nobles were excluded, as it appeared to be an axiom in Tuscany that they should be; but the Nine and the Twelve had both of them a share in the administration; and, in addition to them, a fresh order or *Monte* was formed, including the rest of the citizens, as distinguished from the populace, and called the Reformers. This order was naturally more numerous than the others, and supplied a greater portion of the governing body than either of them, though not than both together; and this arrangement appears to me not only to imply that some sense of the true objects of government had at last begun to dawn upon the minds of the Sienese, but also, as far as I know, to be abstractedly the very best, except only the Florentine one of 1343, of all the Italian constitutions of this century.

The new settlement was not, perhaps, very pleasing to Charles, who found the internal feuds of his Italian subjects very profitable to himself; but he, of course, gave his Imperial sanction to what had been done, and contented himself with leaving private instructions with Malatesta the Hungarian, to stir up cabals against the government, while he himself proceeded to Rome to meet the Pope, who was also advancing thither by slow stages. His behaviour there was of a piece with the rest. He knew he had not treated Urban fairly, and perhaps was ashamed of himself; and he tried to make up for it by demonstrations of respect which almost amounted to adulation. The Pope took it all very quietly, and not without a good deal of contempt; and the world in general, even the Romans themselves, muttered

that, to abase the dignity of the Empire was not the way to make amends for treachery towards the Church. Having done this, Charles returned to Siena, which he flattered himself that he should be able to get into his own possession. His ulterior object was to raise money by selling it to the Pope, who, for some unexplained reason, was anxious to have it, and would probably be willing to pay a large sum for it; and all Charles's ideas were more or less explicable by a reference to his pocket. During his absence, the Twelve, doubtless not without some instigation from Malatesta, had made an attempt to recover their exclusive authority. The plot had been detected: the government, with unusual moderation, contented itself with baffling it, and rendering the chance of another more remote by adding to the numbers of the members of the Third or Reformer order in the signory, without proscribing the Twelve, as might have been expected from precedent; but the latter were too angry to be thankful for the forbearance shown towards them; and in order to be revenged they lent themselves to be the instruments of the Emperor. In concert with them and their aristocratic allies of the house of Salimbeni, Charles determined on a *coup d'état*. On a stated day they marched in force to the public palace, and demanded the surrender of some obnoxious members of the signory, while he and Malatesta the Hungarian, at the head of three thousand men-at-arms, advanced in different directions to their support. The Government stood boldly by its impeached members, barricaded the palace, and prepared for defence. The great bell was rung violently, as a signal of distress; and it was answered from every quarter of the city. The excited citizens flew, sword in hand, to the rescue: the palace, which was all but taken by the Salimbeni and their party, was saved, and the invaders driven out, and chased to their homes with slaughter. The cavalry of Malatesta, attacked in the narrow streets, where they could not act, were broken, routed, and forced to fly, leav-

ing the ground strewn with corpses ; and the armament of the Emperor met with no better fate. In front, the companies of the burgher militia barred advance, while to the rear and on either flank there poured down from the houses above a pitiless shower of missiles. The bravest soldiers and the most distinguished nobles in Charles's train, were dropping one by one ; and it became clear that the sacred person of the Emperor himself was not safe. He took to flight, but his enemies were at his heels ; he was chased from one place of refuge to another, and at length blockaded in the palace of the Salimbeni. No attempt was made to force this last asylum ; but the captain of the people intimated to him that, though he need be under no apprehension of violence, he could only be allowed free egress on condition of agreeing to leave Siena forthwith. Charles hesitated ; and the captain, to give point to his request, issued orders that no food should be allowed to pass into the palace. For several hours the wretched Emperor and his followers were kept under duress. In his distress he went round from one of the hostile posts to another, blubbering like a great baby, bestowing affectionate embraces on such as he could get hold of, and imploring them to let him out. He had never meant any harm, he said : it was all a mistake—he was their Emperor, and loved them like a father—but he had been imposed upon by the wicked Salimbeni and the wicked Monte of Twelve, and by his own unfaithful servant Malatesta. He would tell them all about it—he would indeed : these bad men had deceived him : they had offered him—heaven knows what they had offered him ; and then came a long story, real or fictitious, of his negotiations, in which he implicated all those with whom he had had any dealings. A hue and cry was raised after those whom he named, and such of them as could be caught were arrested : but the ruin of his own friends was the sole result of his talking ; for the soldiers of Siena stood

unmoved by all that he could say, and still less by all his slobbering and kissing. At last, half-dead with shame and hunger, probably the latter more than the former, he gave into whatever was asked of him, and in fact a good deal more than was asked ; for he had quite lost his head, poor man, by this time. The Vicariat of the Empire (which he had shortly before given to Malatesta) was now conferred in perpetuity on the Signory of Siena : a full indemnity was awarded by him to the people for the affront he had just suffered, and a variety of other favours were given in addition ; and then he was allowed to have his dinner. After that meal his spirits rose, and he began to talk of the dignity of the Empire, and how the insult must be washed out in blood. The Sienese knew what this meant ; and reflecting that, absurd as he was, he might, by the aid of their own internal factions, become very troublesome if he staid, and that he had not a shilling to his name to pay his travelling expenses, and therefore could not go away, they resolved to buy him off for 20,000 florins, half of which they paid down at once. Charles had not much pride, and was very fond of money : he was one of those people who would allow you to kick him down-stairs every day of the week if you paid him for it ; and he took his florins, pocketed them, and went off, apparently not conscious of having suffered any degradation.

His departure did not, however, bring peace to Siena. The Twelve and the exiled nobles were, from different causes, at war with their countrymen, without being at peace with one another ; and for several months fighting and disturbance went on unceasingly. At length, towards the middle of the year 1369, peace was restored by the strenuous efforts of sensible and moderate men of all parties, and the mediation of the Florentines. The constitution was slightly modified, so that the three plebeian orders might have a proportionate share of the government : the nobles,

though still excluded from the signory, were allowed to hold any other magistracies ; and though the incompleteness of their admission to the rights of citizenship probably rankled a good deal in their minds, and though the best laws that could be devised were incapable of eradicating the factious feelings, and blotting out the resentful recollections which the late stormy events had produced in all classes, at any rate present quiet was obtained. It will depend on the good sense of the people and the wisdom of the statesmen to whom their government is confided, whether this is to be the opening of a settled calm, or to be merely a temporary lull.

I have something still to say about Charles the Fourth. To the last he continued to maintain his character. He tried to get into Pisa, where he wished to play the same game which had so signally failed at Siena : but the government would not admit him, and a sudden and treacherous attack which he attempted on that city in concert with some partisans within its walls of the Raspanti faction, was defeated disgracefully. He was quite unabashed, however. He let loose large bodies of Transalpine cavalry to ravage the Pisan territory, and sent others to harass that of Florence, under pretence of claiming some Imperial rights ; and both republics thought it would be cheaper to buy peace and such prerogatives as they wanted from him, than to wage war with him in earnest. One is rather surprised at their doing so : but one must suppose that they knew what their interests were when they agreed to pay him 50,000 florins a-piece to leave them alone ; and Charles, who had no idea of honour and dignity that was not expressible in hard cash, was delighted with his bargains.

Before leaving Italy, however, there was another stroke of business to be done, more lucrative, and also more discreditable. We have seen how he contrived, in return for the promise of a diploma which, after all, he did not give,

to induce the Doge Agnello to surrender into his hands the city of Lucca. Now, the runaway match which we figured to ourselves some little time ago as having taken place between the pretty widow Lady Lucre, and her dashing cousin Captain Leaningtower, has not proved a very happy one. The captain has treated his wife very badly, and when she remonstrates, has got into a habit of beating her severely ; and at last she has left his house, and put herself under the protection of the magistrates. The misery, however, which she has undergone has done her a great deal of good, for it has purified and elevated her character. In truth, the Lucchese, perhaps like the Italians of the present day, have improved wonderfully under the discipline of misfortune. They had been frivolous and indolent, selfish and corrupt. Their long adversity had taught them lessons of endurance and self-sacrifice, and had strengthened the love of their country and the love of liberty which had never been wholly extinct in their hearts. Charles saw and rejoiced in the change. Its moral aspect probably did not impress him very much. But it was clear that a people who were so zealous for freedom would be willing to pay for it ; and great advantage might be derived by managing this feeling properly. In spite of all his shortcomings, the Lucchese looked upon him with feelings of strong affection as the son of John of Bohemia, the best and gentlest of their many rulers, and as their recent deliverer from the hard and unsympathising rule of the Pisans. They could not believe that his motives were utterly selfish : but they thought that he might be ambitious of Italian sovereignty, and perhaps that he might have some feelings corresponding to their own which might make him loth to sever his connection with themselves. So when they put up a petition to him to restore to them their old republic, they did so in timid and apologetic tones. When Charles gave them to understand that he might possibly be induced to comply

with their request, if they paid him for doing so, their joy and gratitude at so much Imperial condescension, were unbounded ; and they determined to show that as much could be got from the love of a free people as from the forced contributions of subjects. The Emperor's demand was enormous, 200,000 florins ; and it was quite impossible that they should pay it. Neither Siena nor Pisa, not even Florence, could have paid such a sum without inconvenience ; and Lucca, during the last fifty years, had lost nearly the whole of that wealth in which she formerly rivalled them. The vindictive jealousy of the Pisans had ruined the commerce and manufactures of the city, which of old had been distinguished by the epithet of " The Industrious ;" and her territory had been curtailed by the loss of an important district which had been annexed to that of Florence. But no sacrifice was too great to be made. They borrowed on every side, and did not scruple to run the risk of pawning their citadel to the Pope, who was their principal creditor, in order to get a loan. Charles, finding out what their disposition was, thought he might press the matter a little further. He invested the ceremony by which he restored their commonwealth with a great deal of superfluous solemnity, made them an impressive harangue, got up a good many shows and festivals in honour of the occasion, for which they had to pay, and finally, made a formal bestowal upon them of the district which they had lost to the Florentines, which there was no chance of recovering, but for which he expected a handsome present notwithstanding. It is said that the entire cost of the purchase of their liberty to the Lucchese was 300,000 florins.

Charles returned to Bohemia laden with ill-gotten treasure. He left behind him in the minds of the Italians a memory compounded of dislike and contempt, and which was an ineffaceable stain on the Imperial name. He had defrauded the Pope of the alliance which he was pledged to

give him, and had given him an adulation which he ought to have considered himself as pledged not to give him ; he had ruined the princes who were his friends, and done no damage to those who were his enemies ; he had requited with ingratitude and perfidy the loyalty of Pisa and Siena, and had in both cases been foiled with such ignominy as no Emperor, not even Henry at Canossa, not even Barbarossa at Venice, had ever suffered before ; and the sole good deed which he performed, the restoration of Lucca, which might have outweighed a multitude of crimes, was so done as to make it, in my opinion at least, the most disgraceful act of the whole. Yet not for all did he forfeit the affection of the Luccese. Not only in the first enthusiasm of recovered freedom, but also after time had been given them to reflect calmly on the means by which it was accomplished, did they cherish his memory as their deliverer ; and when all the rest of the Italians, Guelfs and Ghibellines, tyrants and republicans alike, united in proclaiming his meanness and avarice, his disloyalty and his childishness, his memory was still venerated as the second founder of their commonwealth by the noble-hearted citizens of the Serchio.

The crusade against the Visconti had been entirely given up in consequence of the treachery of its leader. It was renewed on his departure. Among the cities which he had induced to place themselves under his protection was that of San Miniato at Tedesco, an ancient burgh situated on the summit of a ridge which bounds to the south the valley of the Arno. It had formerly been a tributary of Florence ; and as soon as Charles had turned his back, the people of that city sent a force to re-establish their authority. In their distress they of San Miniato applied for assistance to Bernabo Visconti. The latter was delighted. His fingers were always itching to be in the Tuscan pie : we have seen how nearly he has succeeded in setting up a vice-

royalty at Pisa: he was at this very moment intriguing to get possession of Lucca; and he at once gave orders to Hawkwood to advance to their relief. The English gained a great victory over the Florentines: but it was a fruitless one. San Miniato fell; and Visconti started back in dismay: for a new league sprang suddenly into existence, in which the Pope and the princes of Venetia stood side by side with the hitherto pacific Tuscan powers, with Florence, with Lucca, and with Pisa.

Urban opened the ball by fulminating a bull of excommunication against Bernabo Visconti. The sentence was borne to him by two legates, a cardinal and a mitred abbot, and, doubtless, was delivered by them with much unction. But they had not fully appreciated the character of him with whom they had to deal. Bernabo cared but little for religious terrors, and was raging like a wounded bear after his recent defeat; and he was not inclined to view the strangers or their mission with either respect or forbearance. "Choose," said he to them, as they stood together on the bridge across the broad and deep canal which intersects Milan—"choose, holy fathers, whether you will eat or drink. For I swear by the might of God that before you leave me you shall do one or the other," and with one hand he pointed to the water below, while with the other he held out the bull which they had brought. "Choose," thundered he. The trembling legates looked round. They were hemmed in by the guards of the Visconti, fierce desperadoes, in whose eyes they read but little hope of their hesitating to obey *any* orders which they might receive, and before them stood the most relentless and unsuperstitious of the tyrants of Italy. Clamour, protestations, entreaties were in vain; and Bernabo looked on with grim satisfaction while, before all the people, these high dignitaries of the Church gnawed and swallowed the parchment scrolls,

and the leaden seals, which bore and attested the awful sentence which a century ago would have brought the proudest sovereign of Christendom to his knees.

This piece of sacrilege, which to us seems rather amusing, and which created but little sensation in the public mind of Italy at the time, completely upset the Pope. He was too much appalled and horrified at its wickedness to be able to get into a rage at it ; and he sadly felt that no amount of wrath on his part could be productive of much good. The forces of the league would fight no better, and those of the Visconti no worse, in consequence of it : not a single neutral state was induced by it to join in the war : the Marquis of Este and the Signoria of Florence displayed no signs of that exalted fanaticism, worth more than battalions of armed men, which might have arisen from a feeling that their enemies were also the enemies of Heaven ; and as for the Lombards, they rather liked Bernabo the better for what he had done. Fortunately, just at this moment he heard that it was possible that his mediation might be of use in staying the war which was raging between England and France. To return to Avignon under these circumstances might appear to him in the light of a duty ; and even if he was mistaken in thinking so, and if he followed his inclinations more than he was himself aware of, there was excuse ; for it was evident that that veneration for the name of the Popes, which was so essential, not only for the gratification of their vanity and the promotion of their interests, but also for their usefulness as ministers of religion, was gone from the hearts of the Italians ; and the slights to which his authority might be exposed among them would be likely not only to render his mission among them a fruitless one, but also to endanger the position which he still held among the more faithful populations north of the Alps. These arguments, which certainly were not without considerable force, were daily and hourly

pressed upon him by those by whom he was surrounded, and in whom he most confided ; and at length yielding to their instances, he left Italy accompanied by his rejoicing cardinals, and returned to Avignon. He returned to it, however, only to die. A severe illness, aggravated no doubt by the agitation of his mind, carried him off almost immediately upon his arrival ; and he had the honour, rarely indeed accorded to the Popes of this century, of being followed to the grave by the universal regrets of Christendom. So strong in fact were these feelings, that many worthy people fully expected him to receive the honours of canonisation.

The death of Urban paralysed the confederacy, and peace was restored. It was only for a moment. The intrigues and aggressions of the Visconti moved the new Pope, Gregory the Eleventh, to put himself, as his predecessor had done, at the head of a league against them. His allies were naturally enough the Estes, the Carraras, the Gonzagas, and perhaps the Scalas on the one hand, and the Marquis of Montferrat and the Count of Savoy on the other. But the Tuscan states stood aloof this time. The conduct of Gregory was extremely suspicious. He had been detected in stirring up conspiracies in different parts of the country : it was strongly believed that he was casting sheep's-eyes on Tuscany ; and Florence, feeling she could not trust him, declined to put herself in a position where he could do her harm. With her acted Pisa and Lucca. They had been taught, by cruel experience, the evils of division and the necessity of union among the free states ; and as they had drawn their swords together in the former war, so *now* they agreed together to keep them sheathed. Siena did the same ; for Siena knew better than any of them what the Pope's character was.

In spite, however, of their inaction, the war prospered to the confederates. The English Company, which the Vis-

conti were so imprudent as to dismiss, took service with the Pope : a great victory was gained by Hawkwood over one Milanese army : another was cut to pieces by the revolted peasants of the province of Bergamo : the territories of Parma and Piacenza were successively ravaged by the forces of the Papal legates and of the Marquis of Este : the Count of Savoy penetrated the Milanese dominions from end to end : the Guelfs burst everywhere into insurrection throughout Lombardy, and hastened to place their strongholds at the disposal of the invaders ; and, finally, the important city of Vercelli was captured. It seemed as though the republics were to be delivered from their worst enemy without having to strike a blow.

But no such good fortune was before them. The war, which was apparently so damaging to the Visconti, had not yet sapped the bases of their power ; and there was no immediate hope of its doing so. In the meanwhile, an unusually rainy season had produced the same effects which had been so miserably notorious nearly twenty years before. The crops throughout nearly the whole of Northern Italy had been destroyed : this produced a famine ; and, as before, famine was succeeded by pestilence. It was useless to continue a war in which, whatever else might happen, it was pretty clear that the troops on both sides, and certainly on that of the invaders, would be starved ; and the allies were glad to get it off their hands, at least for the present, by concluding a truce for a year. There was no great harm in this. But the Pope and his legates had something further in view. The great visitation which was afflicting Lombardy was felt no less heavily in Tuscany : its horror was aggravated by the violence of the factions which it was insufficient to appease ; and the governments of the different states, obliged to strain their resources to the utmost to provide food for the people, had dismissed the greater part of their soldiers. Gregory, falling into the usual mistake of

despots when dealing with free states, thought that a nation must be weak unless it has a powerful army, and that because a party is opposed to the existing government it must therefore be willing to sell itself to any foreign potentate who chooses to bribe it; and he fancied that he might take advantage of the present opportunity to make himself lord of Tuscany. In order to do this, his legates thought it desirable to weaken the republics of that country a little further; and they had in their hands the means of doing so. The district of Romagna, which was almost entirely subject to them, had been comparatively exempt from the famine, and was consequently enabled to send some of its produce to nourish the stricken people beyond the Apennines. Cardinal Noellet, the legate of Bologna, thought it would be a fine stroke of policy to put a stop to this commerce; and he issued an edict to that effect. The Tuscans had in consequence to get their corn from more distant countries; and the disarrangement of trade was very costly to them, to say nothing of the additional misery which this insane piece of malice must have produced in the meanwhile. But they bore through it as best they might; and the approach of the summer of 1375, bringing with it the promise of a rich harvest, held out hopes that, in spite of his Holiness's kind intentions, prosperity might come back to them, when they were astounded by the appearance of Hawkwood, the Papal *condottiere*, at the head of his mercenaries, charged, as it seemed, with a special mission to destroy the crops in the Florentine territory. To the remonstrances of the injured people there was only returned the insulting reply that the English chief was no longer in the Pope's service, having been dismissed just before, and that the Florentines had better pay him to leave them alone. The truth of this pretence, even if there could have been any doubt about it, was tested by a simultaneous attack with the same object which the legate

of Perugia made, in his own name, on the territory of Siena : and a still more direct proof of its falsehood was given by the discovery of a conspiracy at Prato to transfer the sovereignty of that city from Florence to the Pope.

Loud and fierce was the indignation among the Florentines. Although they had not thought fit to join, as contracting parties, the league which had lately waged war against the lords of Milan, they had, according to a practice not considered at that time to be a breach of neutrality, sent, in proof of their devotion to the Pope, almost the whole of their small army to serve under his banners ; and the only return they had received was a series of spiteful injuries, such as no other power, let alone an ally, would have inflicted upon them, unless actually on the verge of war. They had stood it very patiently hitherto : but there was a point beyond which human endurance could not reach ; and that point had been passed. All respect for the Pope as chief of the Guelfs, all veneration for him as head of the Church, was swept away in that moment of wild fury ; and the cry for vengeance on the unfaithful priest and his insolent gang of foreigners arose at Florence, and was taken up by the responsive shouts of Lucca, of Siena, and of Pisa. War was at once resolved upon. At Florence, which took the lead and acted with the greatest promptitude of all the Tuscan republics, eight commissioners, called from their numbers and their office the "*Otto della Guerra*," were nominated at once for the purpose of organising a campaign against the Pope. They lost no time in acting ; for they raised an army, gave the command of it to a German officer of high repute, inscribed on the banner which it bore, in token of their objects and intentions, the word "*Libertas*," and sent it to bear that watchword among the people of Central Italy.

The project of the Florentines was worthy of their character. They had no thought of securing any advantage for themselves, or adding an acre to their territory ; but they re-

solved, while inflicting a signal punishment on the treachery of the Pope, to render at the same time a service to the cause of freedom, by inciting the cities which obeyed their enemy to throw off his yoke and restore their republican government. Nor did it seem that the task would be difficult. The triumphs of the Church had been partly owing to the unpopularity of the signors; and the legates were far more unpopular than the signors had been. Frightful stories were told of their cruelty, their rapacity, the outrages which their dependents inflicted on the honour of the citizens, the insolent levity with which complaints were received; and the bitterness of feeling which was thus engendered was a thousandfold aggravated by the fact that the injuries were inflicted by foreigners, who took every opportunity of showing their contempt for the Italians as a nation. The result of this was as might have been expected. The approach of the Florentine "army of liberty" was like the sun after a hard frost. Everywhere the icy dominion, by which the stream of Italian life was congealed, was broken up; and in the great thaw the floods burst forth and swept the frozen masses like reeds before them. The towns of Umbria and the Patrimony of St Peter rose upon their oppressors with a kind of unanimous impulse: Comarca and the greater part of Romagna followed. Bologna still remained quiet under the dominion of the legate: but the fidelity of Bologna was only recompensed by the surrender of some of the towns of her territory to be pillaged by the English in compensation for their arrears of pay; and that great city, indignant at this treacherous cruelty, suffered herself also to be carried away by the stream, drove out the papal garrison, proclaimed the republic, and enrolled her powerful name among the members of the Tuscan League. Of all the conquests of Albornoz, the only one of any importance that remained to the Church was Rimini; but her adhesion was the allegiance of a tributary, not the obedience

of a subject : it was based entirely on the fact that it suited the convenience of the Malatestas that it should be so ; and the fickleness of the Malatestas was proverbial.

Here was a pretty tale to go to Avignon. "With wrath," to adapt the words of Ingoldsby, "the great" Pope Gregory "shook : he called for his candle, his bell, and his book." An eloquent harangue by Donato Barbadori—chief of the Florentine envoys, who were sent to explain and apologise—though it drew sympathetic tears from the Italian cardinals—produced no effect upon the mind of their master ; nor, to say truth, was it very likely to do so, considering that its chief point was the blessings of liberty. The answer was a sentence of interdict against the republic, and excommunication against all its magistrates. Nor did the denunciation end here. All sovereigns were not only empowered, but commanded to confiscate the goods and arrest the persons of all Florentines residing within their dominions ; and such as could be laid hands upon were to be sold into slavery. The horrible iniquity and cruelty of this edict, instead of petrifying the envoys, roused them to a higher strain of indignation ; and one of them, the same who had delivered the oration in defence of his country, turning towards a crucifix which stood in the middle of the hall, solemnly appealed from the tribunal of the Pope to that of Almighty God. This appeal, however, though it did much to weaken the force of the excommunication on the minds of those who heard it, did nothing to alter its practical results : for the sovereigns of Europe, though under ordinary circumstances they showed no extraordinary reverence for Papal behests, were very sedulous in their attention to this one ; and the most rigorous of them all were those in whose dominions more than in any others the Florentine merchants traded—the Kings of France and England. Only at Venice, whose government was the sworn foe to ecclesiastical pretensions, and at Pisa, whose Ghibel-

linism was at last of advantage to the cause of freedom, were the Papal censures entirely disregarded.

Thus did the Pope punish Florence ; and although the government and the nation put a bold face upon the matter, the former levying taxes on the clergy for the prosecution of the war, and the latter enthusiastically renewing as it expired the commission of those whom, in spite of their having been so solemnly given over to the devil, they called the "*Otto Santi*"—in spite of this, the punishment was very severe. The Florentines had not that imperturbable coolness which enabled the Venetians so quietly to disregard spiritual censures when they were unjustly inflicted ; and the maledictions of the Pope were followed up by consequences which had, on a former occasion, proved too much for the stubbornness of even the Venetians. But heavy as their chastisement was, a still heavier one was meditated against the disloyal children who had dared to cast off their allegiance to Mother Church. The Cardinal Robert of Geneva was despatched from Avignon on a mission of conquest and punishment at the head of a company of Bretons, the bloodiest and most relentless of all the bands of brigands who had yet crossed the Alps ; and their commander was quite worthy of his men. The sort of mercy which might be expected from these ruffians might be seen from the conduct of the English, who had lately, on a suspicion that Faenza was likely to revolt, been let loose upon that city by the legate, and had committed there the most frightful outrages ; and bad as Noellet and the English were, the new-comers had the reputation of being worse still.

Robert of Geneva passed through the dominions of Galeazzo Visconti. The latter's brother, Bernabo, though no friend to Florence or her allies, had an even stronger dislike for the Pope, and was a member, though not a very sincere one, of the Tuscan League, to the forces of which he had

actually sent a contingent ; and Galeazzo himself was no great lover of the Church. It was necessary to buy his leave to pass ; and Robert did not hesitate to do so. He was in such a hurry to massacre his enemies, that in order to be able to do it sooner, he had no objection to empowering other people to massacre his friends ; and on Galeazzo's demand, he agreed to abandon the Lombard Guelphs, whom the Pope had persuaded to revolt, to be dealt with as Viscontine clemency might dictate. Thus, preceded by terror, and followed by curses and lamentations, did this pillar of the Church traverse Northern Italy ; and at length he appeared before Bologna. A demand, couched in moderate language, to be allowed to enter that city at the head of his troops was met by an unqualified refusal ; and the Bolognese were then informed to their comfort that His Eminence did not propose to leave them till he had washed his hands and his feet in their blood. There was no immediate prospect of carrying out this beneficent project, for Bologna was a large city, and the citizens were quite prepared to fight ; besides, they were supported by the presence, within their walls, of a large part of the army of the League : so to prove that he was in earnest, he attacked some small townships in the neighbourhood, took some by capitulation, others by storm, and allowed the Bretons to pillage them all, terms or no terms, and slaughter the whole of the inhabitants. He then retired into winter quarters. The place which he selected for this purpose was Cesena. Amid the general break-up of the Pontifical dominions, this city had remained firm in her allegiance ; and the chief command within her walls was held by Galeotto, the head of the loyal Malatestas. At the legate's command Galeotto retired and the Bretons were admitted. Now the latter, who had shown their valour so profusely in massacring unresisting townspeople, had just received a pretty severe snub in another way. Their bragging was nearly as in-

tolerable as their cruelty. They had announced that "if the sun could enter Florence, they could enter there also ;" and just before this, two of their number had stalked into Bologna, and given a general challenge to any of the army of the League who dared meet them in single combat. The defiance was immediately taken up by two gentlemen from Tuscany, Betto Biffoli and Guido d'Asciano, the former a Florentine, the latter a Sienese ; and in the combat which followed, and which took place in sight of both armies, both the Frenchmen were unhorsed, wounded, and taken prisoners. The Bretons were a little put out of countenance by this commentary on their large talking, and at being forced to realise the fact that it was conceivable that there might be places where the sun's rays could get in and they could not follow ; and their tempers were not sweetened thereby. It was in this mood that they marched into Cesena. As soon as they had got in, they fell upon the unoffending citizens, and treated them as if they had taken their city by storm ; and there followed a scene of pillage, havoc, and rapine which left the English exploits in that line at Faenza far behind. A short experience of these horrors was enough to madden the Cesenates beyond endurance. By a sudden impulse they flew to arms : the Bretons were swept before them ; and at length, after suffering terrible losses, they were shut up in the citadel. To everybody's surprise, the legate's conduct was mild and reasonable. He admitted that his own troops had behaved abominably, and had richly deserved their punishment, and that the citizens had been justified in revolting ; but he trusted that they would now be willing to return to their allegiance, and accept the amnesty which he was most ready to grant them. The messenger who bore this proposal was Malatesta. The Cesenates, overjoyed at the kindness and gentleness of the unjustly-maligned Cardinal, and at the consideration which he showed for them in al-

lowing his proposals of peace to be brought to them by one whom they revered and trusted, made haste to assent, and, eagerly throwing open their gates, welcomed again as friends the foreign ruffians whose treacherous cruelty they had chastised. Then the Cardinal, sure of his prey, ordered the English to advance from Faenza. Hawkwood, it is said, hesitated ; for he suspected his employer's villany, and, hardened as he was, shuddered at the idea of what he was expected to do : but there was no choice, as the orders were imperative. He marched his men up through the open gates ; and two foreign armies were assembled within the devoted town. Then the signal was given to the Bretons that their revenge was come ; and a massacre began, great and hideous, such as Italy had not yet known, nor was to know again till the barbarians of Transalpine Europe were let loose upon her again in the sixteenth century. The Cardinal was in the midst of the scene, calling like a maniac for blood. " Kill all ! all ! leave not a soul alive !—blood ! blood !" and the ferocious soldiery assuredly did not require his exhortations. Old and young, noble and pauper, men and women, were included in one indiscriminate murder ; and happy were they who were allowed to have a speedy death. Children were dashed against the walls before the eyes of their parents, wives hacked to pieces in the presence of their husbands, even priests and nuns stabbed upon the altars. The streets ran foaming with blood, the air was loaded with the exulting shouts of the murderers, and the screams of terror or agony of their victims ; and still the Bretons slaughtered on, and still the Cardinal yelled for more. The English, like their countrymen who four centuries later looked down at the massacre of the Rohillas by the troops of the Nawab of Oude, took little or no actual part in this frightful crime. Though England can in no sense be held responsible for the deeds of the White Company, who were most undeniable ruffians, one

is glad that they had some fragments of humanity left in them ; and one is sorry to be obliged to confess that, though they did not shed blood, they took advantage of the opportunity to load themselves with plunder. At length the carnage ceased for want of victims to kill. A few of the Cesenates, by the connivance of Hawkwood, escaped from the city, and fled to bear the dreadful story to their countrymen ; but by far the greater part of the population perished. Cesena, the most beautiful and smiling of all the numerous towns of the coast, became in one day an abode of horrid silence ; and when the destroyers retired, they left nothing but bare walls, inhabited by mangled corpses.

It might have been expected that this day would have been the last of the Papal dominion in Central Italy, and that there would have been a general upheaving of sentiment against the priestly miscreants who could order a massacre which for perfidy and atrocity surpassed anything told of the Visconti, and for which they had not even the poor excuse of religious fanaticism : but it was not so. There was, indeed, a good deal of indignation. Perugia, the city which in our own day has been destined to experience a treatment from the same hands as repugnant to the feelings of the nineteenth century as the slaughter just related was to those of the ruder fourteenth century, testified her abhorrence for the deed by ordering masses to be said for the souls of the murdered Cesenates. Florence, after baffling an attempt on the Pope's part to set her people against their government, resolved to keep no measures with such an enemy, and forced the clergy to reopen the churches, which, out of respect to the interdict, they had hitherto been allowed to keep closed, and celebrate the divine offices as if nothing had happened. Finally, Hawkwood threw up the Legate's service, and entered into that of the League ; and I hope that he was actuated in doing so by disgust at the work over which he had been called to

preside. But in other quarters there prevailed a strange apathy. The Romans, in spite of the eloquent and strenuous exhortations of the Florentines, allowed their desire for the loaves and fishes which the Pope's presence brought with it to overcome, not only their indignation, but also their love of liberty, and actually went so far as to offer to confer their signory on Gregory if he would return to them ; and about the same time a revolution at Bologna, which raised a new faction to power, led to that great city placing herself again under Papal supremacy. The conditions under which both Rome and Bologna submitted were such as might seem to insure them plenty of practical independence : but the moral effect of their submission was not the less powerful ; and Florence and her allies, in spite of repeated victories in the field, and the success of their arms in carrying conquest and revolution into those parts of the Pope's territory which had not hitherto thrown off his yoke, began to weary of the war. Gregory was not less eager to terminate the contest : for he was losing ground every day, and he could not be blind to the fact that the submission of the two greatest cities of Central Italy was owing to the opinion, not that he was too strong to be resisted, but that he was too weak to do them any harm.

Negotiations for peace were accordingly opened under the mediation of Bernabo, whom the Pope himself proposed as arbitrator of the dispute. This seemed a very fair, nay almost a generous proposition on His Holiness's part ; for Bernabo, as we have seen, was an ally of the Florentines. But Gregory knew perfectly well what he was about. At the very opening of the business, Visconti pronounced an award, that the League, in consideration of the expenses of the war, and of the losses which the Pope had sustained, should pay him, as a preliminary, a sum of 800,000 florins ; and this preposterous demand may seem less extraordinary when we find that the latter had covenanted to give the

arbitrator one-half of whatever he decided that the other party should pay. The style of award which Bernabo might be expected to give on other points might be pretty well guessed from this commencement; and the Florentines were looking forward nervously to a fate which they were powerless, consistently with honour, to decline submitting to, when the negotiations were suddenly broken off by the intelligence that Gregory the Eleventh had died at Rome.

We have arrived at the year 1378—a year which, by its stirring events, goes a long way towards compensating for the dulness which I confess has weighed heavily upon me for a very considerable period. There is always something disappointing about this part of Italian history. There is often an appearance of something great going to be done, and it always ends in nothing, or next to nothing; and one keeps fancying that one always hears the perpetual word of command, “As you were!” We are going to see a good deal of energy displayed—whether much good is likely to come of it, will be seen; but, at any rate, there will be action, and action enough to make it desirable to begin another chapter.

Apart, too, from the desirability of making the episodes of 1378 the subject of an *entr'acte*, the date at which we now stand is not an unfitting one for closing the history of the second generation of the Visconti of this half-century. It was in this year that Galeazzo Visconti died, and was succeeded by his son, the same whose marriage with a daughter of the house of Capet has been already mentioned; and though the abler and more formidable Bernabo lived and reigned for some years longer, yet the rest of his career presents no very remarkable points for our consideration. From the death of Archbishop Giovanni to that of his nephew Galeazzo, the conflict between the two principles has been rather one of influence than of force. The wars have been generally waged by tyrants against tyrants, and

by republics against republics; and of the two chief instances in which freedom and despotism have come into collision, the one was an attempt by a Ghibelline city to raise the republican standard within the dominion of Ghibellinism and tyranny; and the other was an outburst of the Guelf communes against the treachery and oppression of the chief of the Guelfs. We are about to look upon a different scene. The interval between the deaths of the two Visconti brothers may be considered as a period of repose, during which tyranny is girding itself up for a fiercer and more resolute assault; and from the death of Bernabo to the end of the century—the end of this second period of Italian history—the Republic of Florence is to wage a mortal war against the mightiest of her antagonists, the most terrible enemy to the liberty of Italy that the Middle Ages produced—the as yet unnamed son of Galeazzo Visconti.

CHAPTER X.

*The Period of Summer—The Battle of Liberty against Tyranny
—Third Half-Century—Concentration of the Struggle (con-
tinued)—Entr'acte the Third—The Events of 1378.*



ALTHOUGH, out of a due consideration of the importance of the events which now fall to be recorded, I have thought it advisable to take breath by beginning a new chapter, I do not do so as a sign of increased prolixity. When once one has at all abandoned the system of generalising the history, and, while marking the salient points from which it takes its character, of avoiding scrupulously the danger of going into details, it is very difficult to know where to stop. As long as one can stride with seven-leagued boots from peak to peak, one is tolerably safe; but when one begins to resort to more ordinary means of locomotion, and for that purpose descends into the country below, one is exposed to all manner of stoppages and difficulties; and besides, objects which, when seen from above, lose their individuality, and only help to contribute to the general effect of the landscape, arrest the attention of the traveller who journeys among them, and who feels impelled to examine them as they come before him, not only by curiosity, but also by a sense that, unless he does, he can know very little of the country in which he finds himself. All I can say in defence

of myself is, that my progress has been by steam, and that, if the train has gone at times slowly, and if the stations have been rather numerous, yet those who have gone through this portion of Italian history before me, will know how circuitous and intricate is the path that must be trodden by those who aspire to anything approaching to a real knowledge of it, and how many hills and valleys I have tunnelled through or bridged over. In one sense, indeed, I feel rather to blame for too great impatience to arrive at our journey's end.

The year 1378 was distinguished as the date of three important events—a great ecclesiastical revolution, a great political revolution or series of revolutions, and a great war. That which I have placed first in the enumeration was the first both in time and in importance, but the interest attaching to it is rather European than Italian; and, viewing it in this light, I hope I shall be able to fulfil the promise I made long ago of leaving Church matters alone for the future, and pass over this one “with a running pen.”

Gregory the Eleventh, as I said, died at Rome. Had he lived a little longer, it is probable that he would have gone back to Avignon. He would, in the course of nature, have died there; and, in all human probability, his successor would have been a Frenchman. More than two-thirds of the college of cardinals belonged to that nation; and though they were divided among themselves by factions and jealousies, such as could hardly fail to arise in the stifling atmosphere of Avignon, which was admirably calculated to foster the rankest weeds of that description, there was one point on which they were perfectly unanimous—they would not go to Rome. It was evident enough that they would have the election of a new Pope quite their own way, and that they would be sure to elect somebody of their own way of thinking; that his nominations of cardinals would be

among men of the same stamp; and so with the cardinals appointing French Popes, and the Popes, in their turn, appointing French cardinals, the same story would be repeated over and over again, and there was no apparent reason why it should not go on repeating itself to all eternity. The only quarter from which any pressure from without could be brought effectually to bear upon them was the King of France: but it was as much the interest of the King of France that the Pope and his court should stay where they were, as it was that of the cardinals themselves; and the Italians might grumble as much as they pleased, but all the grumbling in the world would do no good; for, according to the Scotch saying, it was a "far cry" to Avignon. But, unfortunately, there existed, and I believe still exists, a traditionary rule, that the election of a new Pope should take place on the spot where his predecessor died; and consequently, in the present instance, the scene of it had to be Rome; and the people of that city lost no time in giving the Sacred College very clear intimations that if they ventured to nominate another foreigner it would be the worse for them.

After a sufficient time had been allowed for the obsequies of the deceased pontiff, the cardinals met in conclave for the election. Their deliberations were interrupted by a furious mob which assembled at their doors, clamouring loudly that they would have no foreigner; and a number of armed men rushed into the palace, and insisted on searching every corner to see if there was any way by which the cardinals could escape. The search and the tumult which they made over it took some time; and when they retired, having brought their Eminences to a frame of mind in which they might be acted on, a deputation from the magistrates of Rome made its appearance, charged to lay before the college, in the name of the body which they represented, a humble requisition that, in the coming election, the shocking state

of Rome, owing to the absence of the head of the Church, would be borne in mind. The cardinals listened to this with a due show of attention, and then delivered their answer by the mouth of one of their number. It was to the effect that they must act in the matter as the Holy Spirit might dictate, and that they could not be influenced by the commands or wishes of men, or by any mundane considerations. The deputation were obliged to put up with this reply, which indeed they might have expected, and withdrew with ominous growls; and the people, as soon as it was communicated to them, showed their sense of its sincerity by raising the outcry fiercer and louder than before, "*Romano lo volemo il Papa, o almanco almanco Italiano!*"

In spite of the bold front which the conclave had put upon the matter when addressing the magistrates, they were by this time pretty sufficiently frightened. It was clear that, if they wished to escape with whole skins, they must do something to gratify the Romans; and it became the object with them, as a body, to do this consistently with dignity; and, with each of the factions which divided them, to do it consistently with their private interests. Now the French cardinals were split into two sections—the Limousins, and the natives of the rest of France. The latter had a slight preponderance of numbers: the former—the countrymen and nominees of Clement the Sixth and Gregory the Eleventh—fully made up for their inferiority in this respect by the compact organisation and directness of purpose of an exclusive clique; and it might be considered that the balance lay pretty evenly between them. This state of affairs gave great and unusual weight to the Italians in the conclave. Though not strong enough to put up any claimant for the tiara on their own account, yet they were strong enough to turn an election; and their suffrages were consequently sought with emulous zeal by both parties. Under ordinary circumstances this would have only led to a good

deal of jobbing: the Italians would have supported that French section which bade most largely or most adroitly for their support—probably the Limousins; and Christendom would have been favoured with another spiritual chief from Limoges, whose accession would have been followed by the accumulation of lucrative benefices for the families of Orsini, Corsini, Borsano and Tebaldeschi, and the promotion of some of their members and relatives to offices about the Court of Avignon. But the present circumstances were not ordinary ones. The idea that an Italian might be eligible to the chief Italian bishopric, which it would formerly have been hopeless, nay, would have seemed ludicrous, to suggest, was now put forward as a claim of right; and the claim was echoed by the threatening voices, close at the doors, of an armed and indignant people.

It was necessary to take some course, and that soon, for the Romans were getting impatient at the delay. The conclave made up their mind that the new Pope must be an Italian. None of the cardinals of that nation would do. Tebaldeschi was too old, and Orsini too young; and besides, they thought that, if they must yield to popular clamour, it would be more dignified to do it with as bad a grace as they could, and that if they must have an Italian, he should at least not be a Roman; so these two, being Romans, were out of court. Of the others, one was a Florentine and the other a Milanese: but objections were found to both of them. Perhaps these difficulties might have been got over by a little judicious management; but the clever and active Limousins had a special motive for pressing them, as they had a pet little intrigue of their own in view.

Among the hangers-on of the Papal Court at Avignon was a Neapolitan prelate, one Bartolommeo Prignani. This man had been invited to Avignon by the Papal chancellor, one of the Limousins, had obtained employment in the office of his patron, and had shown no inclination to

give it up for the sake of attending to the affairs of his own diocese, that of Bari; and in spite of his Italian name and his Italian archbishopric, he had come to be regarded—as, in fact, in habit and feeling he was—as a Frenchman. Upon him the Limousin cardinals pitched as their candidate, and it seemed to be a very clever selection. To outward appearance he was an Italian, and that would pacify the Roman people; to those who knew more of him he was a Frenchman, and that would be pleasing to the majority of the college. As he owed his advancement to, and in fact was a member of, the Limousin party, he was nearly as acceptable to them as one of the cardinals of that province would have been; and the opposite faction might console themselves by the thought that, not having the same direct interest in making the papacy a pocket-benefice for the district of Limoges as former popes had had, he might be more liberal in his appointments; and that, at any rate, if they were forced to the alternative, a *quasi* Limousin was better than an Italian, for a *quasi* Limousin would probably stay at Avignon, while an Italian would be sure to go to Rome. Finally, the archbishop had a great reputation for learning and piety, and was not supposed to have much ability; and while the first half of his character would be a strong recommendation in the eyes of the world, the latter was an even stronger one to the Limousins, who expected to rule in his name. Under these circumstances, the nomination of Bartolommeo, which was made by one of the Limousin cardinals, met with great favour. The sole opponents were Orsini and Corsini: the latter wanted to elect Tebaldeschi, the former wanted to be elected himself: but they were overruled, or at least outvoted; and at length, finding that they were in a hopeless minority, they withdrew their objections, and swelled to unanimity the chorus of voices in favour of the Archbishop of Bari. Great fears were still entertained lest the nomination should, after all, not be satisfactory to the

people ; but they took it very quietly : and the Pontiff-Elect, who had been lying for some time, shaking in his shoes, in some hidden recess about the Vatican, was at last persuaded to come out of his hole, was presented to the conclave, consecrated Pope, and enthroned under the title of Urban the Sixth.

It was a clever manœuvre on the part of the Limousins, and deserved to have succeeded better than it did ; but, as a matter of fact, it was about the worst appointment that could have been made, both for them and for Christendom. Before neglecting the sayings, which must even then have been commonplace, about good servants making bad masters, and the effects of sudden prosperity, they ought to have been very certain of their man ; and they knew nothing, in truth, about him. They had imagined him to be, I fancy, a kind of Celestin the Fifth, or in other words a pious fool : but Urban was not pious at all, or if he was, it did not appear in his practice ; and though he was a fool, there was another asinine quality which he possessed to such an extent as to do much to counteract the effects of his folly ; for he was as obstinate as any animal that ever cropped thistles on a common, and not at all likely to be guided by anybody. He very soon let them know whom they had to deal with. One of his first acts was to proclaim that he meant to reform the Church, and he began by settling the number of dishes that the cardinals were to be allowed to have for dinner. He then announced that he always meant to pass his winters at Rome with his Court ; and before its members had got over their first disgust at this prospect, they were still further enraged by an answer which he delivered, in the presence of them all, to a deputation of the Roman magistrates. The latter had waited upon him to beg that, according to custom, he would inaugurate his accession by a creation of new cardinals. “ Go back to those that sent you,” answered Urban, “ and inform them that I

not, only mean to comply with their request, but I mean my nominees to be Italians ; and I shall take very good care to create enough to prevent the Transalpines from having a majority in the college any longer." None of these proposals of Urban's were in themselves bad, but the cardinals were justly angry at the way in which they were put forward, which was gratuitously offensive ; and, unfortunately, His Holiness did not reserve his offensiveness for occasions when it might pretend to be dictated by honest indignation. He used to fly into a passion with the dignitaries of his court constantly ; and under those circumstances would call them fools and swindlers without the least compunction ; and this, to men of high birth and exalted rank in the Church, was intolerable. The majority of them could bear to stay with him no longer, and obtained his permission to retire to Anagni, which Gregory had fixed upon as his abode for this summer, and where they had made all preparations for a residence of some months : but hardly had they arrived and settled themselves there, when they received orders to go at once to Tivoli, for the Pope was going to pass his summer there, and expected them to follow him.

This was too much. The cardinals had gone to a great expense in fitting up lodgings for themselves at Anagni, and were in no mood to find that all their money had been wasted, and that they were to begin in a hurry to make fresh establishments, especially at a place like Tivoli ; and they refused to stir. Foreseeing that the Pope would attempt to punish their contumacy, they took immediate measures to protect themselves, secured the adherence of as many mercenaries as they could, organised a party among the feudatories of the Holy See, and gained over the captain of the fortress of St Angelo itself ; and having done this, set themselves to see whether there were any weapons in their spiritual armoury which would serve them in the impending

contest. Urban stood alone against them : for the French, Limousin or not Limousin, had buried their sectional differences in a common opposition ; and the Italians, though holding somewhat aloof from their Transalpine colleagues, did not do so from any affection for him. But this disadvantage was speedily remedied by the creation of a batch of new cardinals, sufficiently numerous to turn the tables and give him a majority ; and the conclave of Anagni saw that the game was up unless they could repay their antagonist in his own coin. It was a mistake to have elected such a man at all, so they said : their excuse for doing so was that they were forced to elect an Italian by the fear of popular violence (it was convenient to forget that they might have had the choice among several members of their own body, who would have been much more acceptable to the people than Urban was) : terrified by the clamours of the Romans, they had conferred the tiara upon one who, so far from being fit to be head of the Church, was not even fit for the society of gentlemen ; but the wrong they had done was not irremediable. The same cause which excused their mistake would also justify its reparation : the Pope had tried to swamp their voices by the creation of new cardinals ; let them silence his by the creation of a new Pope. At Anagni they were safe under the protection of the Breton Company, which had adhered to their party. The Italian cardinals were not with them : they could neither be overawed from without nor hampered from within ; and their suffrages, guided by their own free-will, fell upon a man in comparison of whom Urban was a model of saintliness and humanity—Robert of Geneva, the butcher of Cesena. He took the name of Clement the Seventh. Neither of the two competitors for the spiritual allegiance of Latin Christendom could excite much respect or affection : the matter in dispute was, if possible, even less attractive than the persons of the disputants. It was

no War of Investitures—no question as to the limits of the spiritual and temporal jurisdictions ; it was nothing but what one might almost call a great club-squabble, the point of it being whether a disagreeable fellow, who had been elected into a society as its president on the understanding that he should behave like a gentleman, and who had not done so, could be turned out of his place by the votes of the other members or not. By degrees the sovereigns and nations of Europe divided themselves pretty equally between the two, according as their interests might lead, without caring, in truth, much about the matter. England, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, and most of the states of Northern Italy, adhered to Urban : France, Castile, Aragon, and Naples followed Clement ; and so began the celebrated schism of the West, which for seventy years was to distract the world without greatly interesting it. We shall happily be able to dispense with taking much further notice of it.

Just before the cardinals had broken into a decided revolt, Urban, still the undisputed chief of Christendom, had made peace with the Florentines. The latter had purchased the withdrawal of the spiritual censures by the payment of a huge sum of money. It is likely that if the agreement had been made a little later they would have got their absolution for nothing : but at that time it was by no means clear, at any rate to outsiders, that the Church was on the eve of a schism ; and it was very clear to the rulers of Florence that their country was on the eve of great troubles—perhaps of a revolution. The causes of discontent had been long working and bearing baleful fruits ; and they had now got to such a pitch that it was felt to be necessary to get rid of any external complications as speedily as possible.

There were two great parties among the burgher aristocracy of Florence, headed, as the old Guelfs and Ghibellines had been, by two leading families. Their names this

time were the Ricci and the Albizzi. Their rivalries, if not as boisterous, were fully as bitter as those of the Bianchi and the Neri had been. There were not, perhaps, as many brawls in the streets as there used to be in the good old days ; but this improvement was counterbalanced by jobbing for offices, bickerings in the councils, and endless bribery and corruption. In their endeavours to trip one another up, good government was rendered impossible. The whole of Florence was turned upside down and inside out ; and the voices of sensible and moderate men, who cared for their country more than for either party, were generally drowned in the unceasing roar of faction.

It shows the wonderful power which names have to stir the passions of people, long after they have ceased to mean anything, that the party-cries of Guelf and Ghibelline should have retained the smallest weight in the internal politics of Florence. Of old they had meant something: on one side had been the cause of municipal independence and the spiritual rights of the Pope ; on the other, the hereditary prestige of the Empire ; and it was quite intelligible that the different states should take one party or the other, as much in consequence of their private feuds as in consequence of any abstract views which they might have formed on the merits of the two sides of the question. It would, therefore, not be very surprising if two cities which had always quarrelled before the Guelf and Ghibelline conflicts began, and which had adopted those names as watchwords to give an excuse for continuing to quarrel, should keep them on after those conflicts were over. Any other names, it is true, would have done as well. They might call themselves the Blues and the Greens, like the old factions of Constantinople—or the Whites and the Blacks, like the Florentines of seventy years back : the names would mean nothing in themselves, but would become the expression of something real. And in looking over Italy generally, one

sees the names Guelf and Ghibelline had really a strong significance. They had nothing to do with the Welfs and the Wibelungs, as they had originally, or with the feud of Church and Empire, as they had in their secondary sense : but they were more than the mere badges of faction : they had come to represent principles, not indeed the same which they had represented in the days of the Hohenstaufens ; but principles whose divergence was even wider, and whose antagonism was deeper and more irreconcilable. But at Florence it is difficult to see that they represented anything. The Guelfism of Florence did not imply submission or devotion to the Pope, as we have lately had occasion to see pretty clearly : it was not a name to perpetuate old feuds with her neighbours, for Siena now called herself Guelf, and though Pisa still kept up the name of Ghibelline, hers was the Ghibellinism of the old school, and she and Florence were now very good friends : it was not a name to perpetuate old factions at home, for everybody at Florence was a Guelf, and there was nobody to quarrel with ; and though, considering the meaning which the words had acquired in the general politics of Italy, Florence did well to put herself forward as a keen and uncompromising supporter of Guelf principles in her foreign relations, yet at home there was no occasion for doing so, as there was not the smallest trace, as far as I know, of a tyrannical faction, or of agents of the Visconti, within her walls. Still, the influence which this mere name possessed was extraordinary ; for, as we shall see, it was strong enough to override the passion, which was so strong a characteristic of Florence, for democratic equality.

Uguccione de' Ricci, the head of one of the great Florentine parties, in searching for a weapon to use in his contests with the Albizzi, had proposed a law that any Ghibelline who might be drawn for any office in the state should, on proof of his being one, be punishable at the discretion of

the *podesta*; that the charge of Ghibellinism was to be held as established if it was supported by six credible witnesses; and that the judges of their credibility were to be the captains of the Parte Guelfa, and the Consuls of the Arts. His object in making this proposal was to damage the Albizzi, concerning whose family there were traditions that it had of old been connected with the Ghibellines. With this story afloat against them, they would, he thought, be sure to oppose the measure; and whether they were successful or not, the result of this would be to create suspicions of them in the eyes of the people, and to shake them in the confidence of the Parte Guelfa, where they at present had great influence. Piero, head of the Albizzi, at once perceived his danger: there was peril every way; but that peril might possibly be averted by rapid and decisive action. He saw that it would not do either to oppose Ricci's motion or to let him have the credit of passing it; and he determined to support it in such a way as to make it seem as if it were his own, and to trust to his hold on the Parte Guelfa to pull him through. These tactics were completely successful. Great credit appears to be due to the leaders of both parties for their management: but the greater praise should follow the greatest success; and the victory decidedly was with the Albizzi. Not only had they escaped the danger of being thought to be tainted with Ghibellinism, but they had contrived to put themselves in the position of being the party which represented Guelf principles in their greatest purity; and while increasing their power over the Parte Guelfa, they had invested, or rather suffered their adversaries to invest, that body with a new and unprecedented judicial authority, which virtually gave to it, and to those who ruled in it, a control over the appointments to all the offices in the state.

Having so completely made themselves masters of the situation, the victorious party proceeded to push their

advantage a little further. The captains of the Parte Guelfa fell into a practice, as soon as the lists of office-bearers for the ensuing two months came out, of "admonishing" such among them as they thought fit, that they should not accept the functions destined for them, on pain of prosecution. Few people could venture to take no notice of such a prohibition. In the frequent changes of parties that had taken place, there were not many families which had not at some time been allied with the Ghibellines; and if a man's origin was obscure, it was impossible for him to rebut assertions about it. There was, at any rate, no doubt that the Parte Guelfa would not neglect to prosecute vigorously anybody who despised their warnings: there were plenty of people who could be got to swear anything against anybody: of the value of the testimony against them their accusers were to be the judges; and as on their decision the *podesta* would be obliged to inflict a penalty which, if he were their enemy, might be death, and could not, under any circumstance, be less than perpetual exclusion from office, together with a heavy pecuniary fine, the risks of non-compliance were too great to be run by anybody who valued his life. By this device the Parte Guelfa and the Albizzi, while avoiding the danger of failure and the certainty of odium which would have attended frequent prosecutions, were enabled to gain everything which they could have gained by such prosecutions had they been invariably successful.

The tendency of these proceedings was of course aristocratic. Not only were new men more insecure from charges founded on the character of their fathers than men of old families, but the Parte Guelfa, to which so much power was given, was a highly aristocratic body. The old nobles, who were excluded by a long series of enactments from every office in the Government, were numerously represented in this society, and even supplied a proportion of its

captains ; and the majority of its members was drawn from the old burgher families, noble in all but in name, whose ancestors had swayed the state since the days of Giano della Bella, and who, proud of the purity of their Guelf blood and Guelf principles, looked upon their plebeian brethren with a very much stronger feeling of contempt than the far-descended patricians of Venice bore towards their subjects, and which, in a certain degree, resembled that with which a New England Abolitionist is supposed to look upon a free person of colour. And the aristocratic tendency of these measures was not likely to be modified by any liberality or moderation on the part of those who gained by them ; for the lordly contempt which both the powerful orders of men who ruled in the Parte Guelfa felt towards the mass of the commonalty was embittered by a sense of injury inflicted upon them by those whom they despised. The nobles resented the Ordinances of Justice : the great popolani smarted under the *Divieto*. By this name was designated an enactment which prevented two members of the same family from holding office at once. As the old families were exceedingly numerous, and extended into wide ramifications, it constantly happened that two or more of the same name were drawn for public functions at the same time ; and in that case, under this law only one would be allowed to act, and the others not only lose their turn, but would have to wait for two years for the next scrutiny before they had a chance of another. The working of this may be imagined by supposing that such a law had existed in Scotland before the Union ; or if, at ancient Rome, Scipio's Spanish career had been stopped during the consulships of Lentulus and Cethegus, or Cinna could not have been chosen consul because Sylla was in command of the force against Mithridates ;* and it was

* This is more an illustration than a parallel ; the restriction did not extend to military matters. But at Florence matters were arranged

bitterly remarked by the great families that, while the services of their ancestors, by making their position conspicuous, led practically to their own exclusion, a number of people who might, for anything anybody knew to the contrary, be descended from the same great-grandfather, and that great-grandfather a Ghibelline, and who certainly were ignorant and inexperienced, were assuming their places at the council-board, and disgracing their country by communicating to her policy the savour of their own vulgarity. Such men ought to be admonished.

As far back as the year 1358, hardly five years from the settlement of the constitution, attempts had been made by the Government to check the working of this system, and laws had been passed with that object. But it was like pouring a pail of water upon a blazing house. The evil went on increasing. The captains of the *Parte Guelfa* went on admonishing with redoubled vigour, till at length the persons against whom their censures were levelled became so numerous as to form a distinct class in the state. At length things got to such a pitch that there was a general feeling of insecurity throughout Florence. No man, however conscious he might be of freedom from Ghibelline sympathies, could feel safe from being deprived of the rights of citizenship: for the admonitions, after having been perverted from safeguards of Guelfism to instruments of faction, were further perverted into weapons of private malice, and employed to crush those against whom the captains of the *Parte* had any personal dislike; and they were accustomed to arrange together amicably, in the style of the Second Triumvirate, each agreeing to admonish his colleagues' enemies,

much more exclusively upon a civil basis than they were in ancient Rome, partly owing to the national character, partly owing to the practice of employing mercenaries; consequently those who wished for state employment came crowding into the civil service, not having, at least in anything like the same degree, the outlet which their large armies and constant wars gave to the Romans.

provided they would do the same by his. For twenty years the internal history of Florence is little more than a series of abortive attempts on the part of the Government to break down, or at least to mitigate, this odious tyranny on the part of those who styled themselves the special defenders of freedom ; but the struggles of the malcontents, though sometimes they led to a temporary relief, only ended by making their chains more painful than before. Wherever the captains of the "Parte" appeared, they were received with bare heads and low obeisances : their daughters were sought for in marriage without portions ; while the portions of the daughters of other citizens who were taken by them, or by members of their families, as wives, were enormously large. Their dependents injured and insulted whomsoever they pleased, without punishment, and almost without complaint ; and to speak a word against them was treated as blasphemy. The cry, "*Fa contra la Parte,*" was a charge which, for its unreasonable application, and for the terrible nature of its consequences, can only be compared to that of Incivism during the Reign of Terror in France ; and it is not an exaggerated expression of a historian, but the distinct language of a statute passed about this period, that if any one said to a half-famished citizen, as he was sitting down to table, that the morsel he was going to put into his mouth was against the party, he would be obliged to set it down untasted, and leave his meal. Under this severe trial, the gay and lively spirit which their free institutions had nurtured in the Florentines, and which broke out so exuberantly in every form of life and action, of joyousness and beauty, became over-clouded, and was exchanged for a gloomy and restless anxiety, which betrayed itself in every word and gesture of a people little accustomed to conceal their emotions. Fear and danger, to use the expression of a contemporary, kept everybody silent ; and the city, the historian adds, was changed from a place of mirth to the abode of

melancholy. The terrible Council of Ten never produced such effects as these. The awe of the Venetian Decemvirate was inscribed on the heart in characters deep and indelible, but unseen : that of the Parte Guelfa was, as it were, branded on the forehead with red-hot iron.

The effect of the war against the Pope was naturally to strengthen the hands of those who struggled against the dominion of the Guelfic clique. It was preposterous, was the cry, that citizens should be deprived of their rights, and have their lives endangered, because their ancestors did more than a century ago what the whole Republic was doing with all its force at the present moment : it was not a time to make devotion to the Pope a test of loyalty to the state. These sentiments, penetrating deeply into the people, were enhanced by the popularity of the managers of the anti-Papal crusade, the *Otto della Guerra* ; and the influence of those magistrates was not diminished by the fact, that while displaying the greatest energy against the enemies of their country abroad, they did not employ any for the purpose of checking their own enemies at home. To the swelling tide of popular discontent the dominant faction exhibited a haughtier and more resolute bearing than ever. The admonitions became more frequent and bolder : the relatives and dependents of the obnoxious Eight were their especial objects : and at length they ventured upon levelling the censures at Giovanni Dini, a member of the board itself.

This brought matters to a crisis. The Albizzi and their allies had put themselves in a position in which they were obliged to go on ; and they appeared resolved to brazen it out with redoubled insolence. Their adversaries, on the other hand, were like men driven to desperation ; and they had among them men whom it was not safe to push too far. Ugucione de' Ricci, indeed, was no longer alive and able to guide their counsels. Shortly before his death he had given

up the faction-fight as hopeless, and purchased peace with the Albizzi ; but his place was more than occupied by men as powerful as, and more persevering than, himself. Among them was Tommaso, of the great house of Strozzi, whose kinsman, Carlo, was the ablest and most active of the chiefs of the Albizzian party ; and with him were the ardent and ambitious Giorgio degli Scali, the wise and single-minded patriot Benedetto degli Alberti, the Cato of the Florentines, and the bold and resolute Salvestro de' Medici. These perceived, by the signs of the times, that a reaction was at hand ; and the opportunity of working it to advantage was afforded in the month of May 1378, when a new magistracy came into office, with the last-named of these statesmen as Gonfalonier.

Salvestro was prevented from acting immediately upon entering office, by a law which limited the right of proposing new measures to the *proposto*, as he was called, for the time being. The office of *proposto*, which conferred this right, was held by each member of the *signoria* in rotation. How the order of succession was settled I do not know—probably it was by lot ; but certainly the dignity of the Gonfalonier did not give him any precedence, and Salvestro was forced to wait for his turn till the 13th of June. He then brought forward a bill for removing the disabilities of the *ammoniti*, for diminishing the power of the Captains of the Parte Guelfa, and for removing the Ordinances of Justice against the nobles. Finding that the opposition to his bill was so great as to offer no chance of its passing, he slipped out, hurried to the hall where the Council of the People, as it was called—the most democratic of the two popular assemblies of Florence—was holding its meeting, and there, indignantly declaring that there was no use in his being Gonfalonier unless he was allowed to carry through what was necessary for the welfare of the state, without being hampered by the opposition of the enemies of the

people, he begged to be relieved from his office, and to be allowed to retire into private life. His words caused an indescribable confusion. The members of the Collegio, before whom the project had originally been laid, as soon as they found out what was passing, hurried to the spot, and implored him not to resign. And their earnestness was not without cause : for, out of doors, the cry was that the city was up : shops were shut and streets barricaded ; and armed citizens, called together by the shout “ *Viva il Popolo !* ” raised by Benedetto degli Alberti, were crowding into the piazza in such numbers that resistance was hopeless. It was necessary to yield ; and Salvestro’s measure passed.

It is the saying of some well-known writer that not the least of the evils of oppression is, that its overthrow is nearly as bad as its continuance, as it tends to produce so violent a reaction that, in pulling down the excrescences of government, the fabric itself is apt to come down also. The tyranny of the Florentine Parte Guelfa is a case in point. The tardy and reluctant concessions made by the ruling faction, so far from satisfying the people, only whetted their appetite for more ; for they knew that they were only made till a good opportunity occurred for revoking them ; and having beaten their enemy, they thought they ought to make sure of their advantage by disabling him. Fresh subjects of complaint were constantly started to give an excuse for keeping up the state of disquiet into which the city had been thrown ; and after two or three days of restless anxiety, during which the trades did not venture to re-open their business, the different guilds or arts suddenly met at their respective halls, armed, and with their standards displayed. The Government, frightened at this new movement, hastily convoked the popular council, and induced them to name a *Balia* or commission, composed of all the principal officers of state in Florence, to take into consideration, with authority to carry out, the

best way of reforming the Republic ; but hardly had this body commenced its deliberations, when the forces of the Arts marched upon the Piazza, occupied it, and then proceeded to sack and plunder the houses of those against whom they bore any grudge. With difficulty they were induced, partly by threats and partly by coaxing, to give over this amusement ; and the Balìa was allowed to legislate. A series of liberal enactments, which were promulgated next day, only led to a fresh outbreak : the malcontents had to be pacified by further concessions ; and at last it was ruled, that of those who had held office since 1320, none should be ever admonished in future ; that all who had been admonished should be relieved from the effects of it ; that the terrible power of the captains of the Parte Guelfa should be destroyed by the abolition of the laws which had created it, and their connection with a single clique brought to an end by tearing up the names of those already drawn for office in that society, and balloting for them afresh ; and, finally, that some violent Albizzians, who had left Florence in disgust, and were supposed to be raising troops in the country, should be declared public enemies. The Ammoniti, smarting under past wrongs, were still unsatisfied, and called upon the government to institute a prosecution against their enemies ; but this the *signoria* steadily refused to do ; and Luigi Guicciardini, a wise and moderate man, who had succeeded Salvestro de' Medici as Gonfalonier, addressing the syndics of the arts, appealed to their good sense and good feeling, reminding them that they had now got all that they could want for their own advantage, and urging them not to press matters too far. "We can bear defeat," he said, "better than you can victory." This speech was listened to with respect : the syndics retired somewhat ashamed of themselves ; the citizens returned to their houses and laid aside their arms ; and it seemed as if order would be again restored.

But the stone which Salvestro and Benedetto had set rolling, was not to be stopped half-way down the hill. The movement which possibly they, and certainly some of those who acted with them, had intended merely to liberalise, while it secured the governing body, and to change the rule of an oligarchical clique into that of the aristocratical class, had already descended from the upper to the middle ranks of society. The part which the Arts, as Arts, had taken, showed that a new element was introduced into the question. Florence was full of divisions and conflicting interests, under whatever aspect she was regarded ; and the lines which separated them often crossed one another. Over and above the feud of Guelf and non-Guelf, and the feud of Albizzi and Ricci, there was another division of the people even more distinctly marked, and productive of hardly less ill-blood and jealousy—that into Major Arts and Minor Arts. This organisation of the people had been legally fixed more than a century ago, and, with some slight enlargements and modifications, had remained ever since as the basis of the institutions and the society of Florence. Seven trades, supposed to be the most important in the city, were distinguished as Major Arts ; others were considered deserving of statutory recognition, though in a lesser degree of dignity, and their number, originally five, had been swollen by subsequent additions to fourteen. The burgher aristocracy, which had so long, and on the whole so well, guided the fortunes of the Republic, belonged to the former class ; and the Minor Arts, occupied with their private affairs, and conscious that the Government was, in the main, conducted as they would have it conducted, might have allowed things to go on as they were, had not the attempt of the Parte Guelfa to found an oligarchical tyranny not only made their sway intolerable, but also furnished the malcontents with aristocratical leaders. The middle classes had at length been induced to act : the power of

the Albizzian faction had crumbled in the dust before them ; and the liberal section of the great popolani was now in possession of the government, resting for support upon the Minor Arts. The movement had thus descended from the upper to the middle ranks of society. It was destined to descend lower still.

Below the Minor Arts was the main bulk of the population of Florence—the trades which had not been thought of sufficient importance to be classified, and which were either not noticed at all, or treated merely as appendages or hangers-on of the more important ones. The greater number of these were attached to the wool trade, the greatest and most powerful of the Major Arts. This large class—which extended downwards in the social scale from the small shopkeeper, who might seem to tread on the heels of the Minor Arts, to the lowest and vilest rabble of the streets—were known under the general name of the *Ciompi*, a corruption of the French *Compère*. The word had been introduced by the followers of the Duke of Athens as a name addressed to their boon companions, and in its application came to bear a meaning somewhat analogous to the *Jacquerie*. These dangerous elements of the nation had been by this time stirred and aroused. The rabble of Florence had been allowed, if not encouraged, to take its part in the late demonstrations : they had had abundant opportunities during their continuance for plunder, of which they had liberally availed themselves ; and the prospect of the restoration of order, coupled as it probably would be with an inquiry into the late disturbances, and the punishment of malefactors, was gall and wormwood to them. Stirred up by the exhortations of some demagogues among them, and frightened by the arrest of some of their companions, they rose in a mass, marched upon the public place, tore down the gonfalon of justice from the window from which it hung, and after two stormy days of riot and pillage, re-

appeared before the Palazzo Vecchio, bearing their trophy with them, drove out all the officers of state, and installed themselves in their room. They had no object in this beyond the love of mischief: for they had already extracted from the Government every concession that they demanded; and when they got in, they do not appear to have known what to do next. A ragged fellow, a wool-carder, Michele Lando by name, who happened to be holding the plundered gonfalon, and who in consequence was pushed forward at their head, turned round, as soon as he got to the top of the stairs, and said—"Now, gentlemen, the Palace is yours. What is your sovereign will and pleasure?" "Oh, Michele!" was the answer, "you have the gonfalon of justice; you are Gonfalonier: reform the constitution." By the merest accident in the world, Michele happened, in spite of his rags and his want of education, to be a sensible man, and probably fitter to wield the great powers now conferred on him than any one else in the multitude of men who were crowding the Piazza. Instead of seeking anything for himself, or exciting the populace to further deeds of violence, he busied himself in endeavouring to restore order. New elections for state offices were immediately instituted, care being taken that the lower people, as well as the Arts, both Major and Minor, should have a share in the government; and the new *signoria* immediately took measures to stop the tumults, threatening the rioters with capital punishment.

The people were not prepared for being treated in this way. For about two months they had had things very much as they pleased, and had behaved like children escaped from school. They had ransacked the houses of those whom they had disliked; they had stolen the great gonfalon of state, and carried it about in childish triumph; they had taken possession of the Palace of the Republic, without knowing what to do with it when they had got it; they had seized upon an obnoxious officer of justice, and

torn him limb from limb ; they had bestowed knighthood upon the chiefs of the liberal party, who submitted to it in order to save their lives, though raging at what they considered the indignity ; and they had conferred the same honour on the gonfalonier Guicciardini, after having burnt his house in the morning of the same day. After so long a period of amusement, they were greatly disgusted to find themselves checked, and that more especially just when they thought that they had a gonfalonier after their own heart, and one who would be sure to allow them to have their own way. They accordingly rose again in arms, deposed the *signoria*, nominated a new one, and marched to the palace in a mass to give effect to their decrees. But they had now to deal with a bold spirit. The tocsin of Santa Maria Novella, where the rebels were assembled, was answered by the great bell of the Commune. Michele Lando called upon all good citizens to stand by the Government. Everybody who had anything to lose made haste to answer to the appeal. Giorgio degli Scali and Benedetto degli Alberti hurried in at the head of their vassals ; and a fierce and bloody struggle terminated in the defeat of the Ciompi, and the restoration, for the time, of order.

The result of this conflict was to leave the Government in the hands of the middle classes and their aristocratic chiefs, Benedetto, Salvestro, Tommaso Strozzi, and Giorgio degli Scali. It was the story of the Sienese *Monti* over again. The new rulers were little better than the old ones had been. They had not, indeed, such a terrible machinery at their command as the Parte Guelfa had supplied to the Albizzi and the Major Arts : but their possession of the Government gave them the power of being very oppressive and insolent, and they did not scruple to make use of it. But circumstances had changed. Not only had they less formidable strength than had belonged to their predecessors, but they had more difficult people to deal with as

subjects. The Major Arts chafed ceaselessly under their deprivation of the supremacy they had so long enjoyed : the Ciompi, having tasted the sweets of unbridled licence, were in no mood to settle again into subordination and poverty. Both classes required to be kept in hand by mild and gentle treatment ; and the Government not only ostentatiously discarded the attempt to rule by any other means than force, but aggravated their harshness by gratuitous insolence. The natural result of this followed. Conspiracy succeeded conspiracy : they were invariably put down by remorseless executions ; and with every fresh discovery the ruling class, becoming at once more exasperated and more confident, pressed down the yoke more heavily than before.

At length it was reported that a plot had been formed on a wider scale than any former one, which, rooted abroad in a quarter where it was unassailable, included in its ramifications some of the greatest names in Florence. In the great schism which then divided Western Christendom, the part of Clement, who, I suppose, must be called the Anti-pope, had been embraced by our old acquaintance Joanna, Queen of Naples ; and Urban, in order to be revenged on her, raised up a competitor for her crown in the person of Charles Duke of Durazzo. The latter gladly undertook the enterprise. His position as the favourite and nominee of the Pope, leading a crusade against an unfaithful vassal seated on the throne of Naples, was somewhat like that of his ancestor and namesake, Charles of Anjou ; and he came to be regarded as a Guelf of the Guelfs, and as the centre of that party. His headquarters at Bologna, where, under Papal auspices, he was levying troops for his expedition, became the general rendezvous of the Guelfs throughout Italy ; and foremost among them were the Florentine exiles. It was natural enough that they should endeavour to enlist the duke on their side, and not unnatural that, following his predecessor's example, he should be disposed to try and

get Florence into his hands by their assistance, and make it serve as a kind of base of operations. The suspicions of the Florentine government at least pointed that way ; and they were soon confirmed, by intimations of what was intended from so many quarters, that they determined to take measures at once. Some eight or ten of the leaders of the Albizzian party were arrested and put upon their trial. They comprised most of the men who, till lately, had been the masters of Florence—men not more distinguished for their birth and wealth than for ability—men who had grown old in the service of their country, and who had made her prosperous at home and respected abroad,—Filippo Strozzi, Donato Barbadori, the bold and eloquent defender of his country before the Papal tribunal of Avignon, and the wise old chief, Piero degli Albizzi, whose greatness and fortune had formerly been a byword in Italy.

The judges before whom the prisoners were brought pronounced a verdict of acquittal ; but the populace of the city, whose excitement had been lashed to the highest pitch by the recent arrests, were like a tiger that has tasted blood. They rose tumultuously, crying that the poor had been punished long enough, and that the rich should not be allowed to escape the fate which they deserved. Benedetto degli Alberti, who ought to have been ashamed of playing such a part, was driven by the fanaticism of party spirit to encourage their violence, and thus stamp his own high character with an ineffaceable blot ; and the mob, fortified with such high authority, came surging up against the walls of the palace, insisting that there should be a fresh trial. The Government were forced to comply. Four citizens were nominated by the people as assessors to the judges, and the investigation recommenced. In order to make sure of the verdict, the accused were put to the torture, so as to extort a confession of guilt ; and some of them, in their agony, made use of expressions which were held to

compromise them enough to justify their being sent to the scaffold. As the sentence was about to be executed in the public place, a sudden panic seized upon the multitude: they fled in terror, crying that Charles of Durazzo was upon them; and had the prisoners condescended to escape they might have done so. But not even the love of life could overpower the dignity of Filippo Strozzi and his companions. They refused to take advantage of the confusion, and calmly waited till it had subsided, and the headsman was enabled to fulfil his office. But neither compassion for the former greatness and the miserable fate of the sufferers, nor admiration for the nobleness with which they met their doom, had power to touch the hearts of that degraded crowd. The sight of blood whetted their thirst for more to an ungovernable pitch; and they raised loud and menacing cries of "The others, the others!" The *capitano del popolo*, if he had laid himself open to the charge of sacrificing innocent lives in order to avoid a tumult, made amends for it now, by resolutely declaring that, as long as he considered the prisoners guiltless, he would never order their execution. He was answered by frantic yells, that if he did not do so, the people would storm the palace, and execute justice on them and him too. Florence seemed on the point of a revolutionary massacre.

At this crisis the prisoners themselves interfered. Piero degli Albizzi, who preserved in misfortune some part of the influence among them which had belonged to him in their days of prosperity, represented to them that their lives were the only things which stood in the way of their country's welfare; that it was doubtful whether, in case of an outbreak, the Government would be strong enough to save them; that even if they were saved, it would only be at the cost of much bloodshed; and that it would be an act worthy of their characters and their former reputation if they would sacrifice themselves for the public weal.

This counsel was listened to and followed. A message was sent to the *capitano*, asking what they were required to confess. That officer very properly answered that he could not tell them. If they were guilty, let them confess their guilt; but that if they were innocent, he would not be the man to put falsehood into their mouths. Upon this the prisoners, having no other means of carrying out their project of self-devotion, took the only method left. They drew up and signed a pretended confession, in which they charged themselves with high treason, and handed it in to the judges. Sentence was at once pronounced, and they were led forth to die.

The Albizzi, in their day of power, had done many deeds which must be stamped with strong and severe condemnation; and I think that there has been no slackness on my part in pronouncing it. But in this evil hour there are few who will not think that their past errors are condoned, or rather lost in the splendour which surrounds their deaths. To die for one's country is at all times an easier thing to speak of than to do; and let the full praise of their self-sacrifice be given to the soldier who defends a hopeless post, the patriot who resists to the death the usurpation of a tyrant, and the statesman who continues with unrelaxed energy those public duties which he knows are bringing him to the grave; but for men to bring against themselves a false accusation, with the certainty that it would entail not only the loss of their lives, but also dishonour to their memory, in order that they might benefit those who were clamouring for their blood, this is something even higher; and if Piero degli Albizzi and his companions were indeed capable of such a sacrifice, their parallels must be sought for, not in secular history, but in that of the Church. Above all, one must look with an admiration which, though it may be combined with sympathy, must totally exclude pity, upon the fate of Donato Barbadori. We have seen before how,

Guelf and Albizzian as he was, he undertook a mission to justify his country in a war in which his party, if they did not openly oppose it, at best were content to acquiesce sullenly, and how, disregarding not only the prejudice of faction, but also the natural awe of superstition, he stood forth before the Great Conclave of the Church, and met the Papal anathemas with a noble appeal, which melted the hearts even of many of his hostile audience; and if there were any of the spectators of the execution who could rise above the brutal ruffianism which seems for the time to have got possession of the lower classes of Florence, they must have felt something approaching to remorse as that once so honoured head rolled upon the scaffold, amid the triumphant yells of the mob.

“*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.*” So, nearly two centuries later, did another Filippo Strozzi, the victim of Medicean tyranny, write in his own blood on the walls of his dungeon. The vengeance of the blood of his ancestor followed speedily and surely. Drunk, as it seemed, with the slaughter of the best and noblest of their fellow-citizens, the chiefs of the Minor Arts, deeming themselves secure from any further attempts to cast them down, flung away all restraint, and became more arrogant and overbearing than ever. The worst of them were Scali and Tommaso Strozzi. The dominion of these two men was such as to make the old evil days of the admonitions regretted. Tyrannical and high-handed as they had been, the Albizzi had produced statesmen worthy of the name. The present rulers of Florence were little better than demagogues. The admonitions of the former had inflicted deprivation of civil rights upon their personal enemies or political opponents; the financial operations of the latter brought ruin and misery to nearly every hearth in Florence. Forced loans, exchequer frauds, prices fixed by law in the interest of the sellers, bribes for assassination, confiscations, executions, spies at street corners,

false witnesses in the courts of justice, rulers merciless because conscious of unpopularity, minions insolent because secure of impunity—was it for this that the whole edifice of government had been shaken down, and that the mob had been allowed to sit in the high places of the Republic of Florence?

By degrees it crept out that there was a split in the Government. Salvestro de' Medici, overwhelmed with shame at the results which had followed upon the movement of which he had been the author, and for which he felt responsible, had for some time ceased to take any part in affairs of state; and though Benedetto degli Alberti had not gone this length, it was pretty well known that he was hardly less disgusted with the turn things had taken. Encouraged by the knowledge of the dissension of their adversaries, the independent citizens began to take courage. An opportunity for action soon occurred. A creature of Scali's, having been convicted of bringing a false accusation of treason against an innocent man, was condemned to suffer the penalty which his statement, had it been proved, would have entailed on his intended victim, and for that purpose was cast into prison. Scali and Strozzi demanded his release; and, on the *capitano's* refusal, determined to procure it by arms—collected a body of retainers, broke open the jail, and set their supporter free. The *capitano*, indignant at the affront thus offered to his office, at once went to the hall where the *signoria* were sitting, and, declaring that he would no longer administer justice in a city where the laws were allowed to be overridden by private violence, gave in his resignation. The chiefs of the government saw that, if they were ever to act, this was the time for doing it. Benedetto, to whom they appealed for support, promised to stand by them in the execution of their duty; and thus encouraged, they bade the officer resume the baton which he had laid down, and empowered him to arrest the offenders. The

rabble, by whose assistance Scali and Strozzi had gained their power, and upon whom they relied for its maintenance, made no attempt to support them. Strozzi, finding the game was up, took to flight, and had barely time to escape; while Scali, more confident, awaited the appearance of the officers of justice, was seized by them, and condemned to death. The sentence was at once carried into effect. Not a hand was lifted, nor word spoken in his defence; and his last moments were embittered by the exulting shouts of the very men who, but a short while back, had cheered the slaughter of his enemies and victims, the Albizzi.

"This day is the end of my calamities; it is the beginning of yours." These words were addressed by the dying man, just before the headsman's axe descended, to his quondam friend and ally, Benedetto degli Alberti, whom he discerned among the spectators of his execution. He spoke the truth. Already, among the shouts which arose around the scaffold of the patrician demagogue, might be distinguished the ominous sound of "*Viva la Parte Guelfa!*" It was heard again louder, and with increasing frequency. The reaction towards aristocracy had set in. The movement, commenced by Salvestro de' Medici, had descended from the higher to the middle classes, and from the middle classes to the people: it was now reascending. Michele Lando's declaration in favour of order had lifted it up one stage—Giorgio degli Scali's execution was the signal for it to mount still higher. Barely a week after his death the Albizzi rose in arms. The people, wearied out with constant commotion and revolution, had no heart to oppose them; and the victorious aristocracy proceeded to nominate a *Balia*, with power to reform the state. All the laws which had been passed in the interest of the revolution during the last four years (for we have now got to January 1382) were repealed by this body: the exiles, whom the storms of that period had driven from their country, were recalled; the

new Arts which had been formed among the lower classes were dissolved; the Minor Arts were deprived of the gonfalon of justice, and restricted to one-third of the public offices; and, though the removal of the old admonitions was confirmed, the Parte Guelfa was restored in its pristine splendour. These regulations were not passed all at once, nor without considerable discontent; but the struggles of the democracy became fainter and fainter; its ablest and most respected chiefs, Michele Lando and Benedetto degli Alberti, were successively driven into exile; and the Major Arts, the Parte Guelfa, the nobles, and the Albizzi, again ruled in Florence.

Thus the great water-floods, which had swollen the stream of freedom till it had burst its banks and inundated the land which it had formerly fertilised, at length subsided. The waters returned into their old channel. Strong hands and wise heads repaired the broken dykes, taught by experience where they most required to be strengthened; and though, here and there, their old traditions induced the restorers to fall into the error of confining the water-way too closely, still the lesson which they had received was not thrown away upon them. The land was often again in peril; the floods came again and again, and rose high and menacing; but though the work was not done with the perfection to which our more complete experience has taught us to aspire, yet, as we compare it, not with what has been wrought by those who have come after, but with what had been wrought by those who had gone before, we may pronounce that it was done well, and that it saved the Florentines from the necessity of having to learn again the dismal lesson once taught them by the great deluge of 1378.

APPENDIX.

THE break-off takes place not only in the middle of a period, but in the middle of a chapter. The chapter in question, which I thought it better to throw into the form of what I call an *entr'acte*, was to have dealt with three things—an ecclesiastical revolution, a political revolution, and a war. It has, in fact, only spoken of the two first, and broken off before entering upon the third. Perhaps that was just as well; for I should have had some difficulty in doing justice to what was the bloodiest, the most desperate, and the most exciting conflict in Italian history—the great struggle between Venice and Genoa, which goes by the name of the War of Chiozza.

Political
history.
Close of the
Trecento.

The eleventh chapter, which would have brought the Summer Period to a close, was to have wound up the “Struggle of Liberty against Tyranny,” by placing Florence face to face with the most formidable of all her enemies, Gian Galeazzo Visconti, first Duke of Milan. Both parties in the struggle will have grown in strength since the days of Scarperia; Milan will have extended her dominions abroad, and will have improved her administration at home; and Florence has been much strengthened by the revolutions described in the tenth chapter, which, like a sharp

attack of fever, have prostrated her for the moment, but at the same time have carried off a quantity of malignant humours which were preying upon her constitution. The disappearance or the weakening of other powers, which have hitherto in a sort of way held the balance between them, or, at any rate, diverted their attention from each other, has left the arena open ; and the result is, that the strife is waged on a scale and with an intensity which had not been seen before in Italy, save only in the wars of the maritime cities. Florence bears herself well and nobly ; but she meets with disaster upon disaster, and victory seems to be inclining slowly to the side of the enemy, when fortune suddenly declares for her in a fashion by no means new in her history. We have often had occasion to notice how opportunely for her advantage the deaths of her assailants take place ; but she never had so good a reason for erecting a temple to Venus Libitina as on the occasion of the plague of 1402, which carried off the most formidable of them all, Gian Galeazzo Visconti.

The death of Gian Galeazzo closes the Summer Period of Italian history ; and it would have been right to pause at this point, in order to consider what parallel might be found between Italian political history and Italian literature and art. I should have tried to devote a chapter to literature. I have neither the reading nor the ability to have attempted a criticism on the poets and the historians of the Peninsula during this period ; and I should have considered myself excused from dilating upon them by the fact, that the "parallel" which was to have been the subject of the sketch is in literature not easy, perhaps not possible, to make out. In fact, Italian literature has no real history. It begins by developing itself beautifully, and bade fair to rival that of ancient Greece ; but it was forced into too early maturity by the overpowering influx of classicalism, which came in about the middle of the

LITERA-
TURE.
1251-1400.

fourteenth century. There is a good deal of classicalism in Dante ; but the spirit of his poetry is purely Italian, and his classicalism is irregular and confined to details. Perhaps you recollect that, in Max Müller's 'Lectures on the Science of Language,' he speaks of the Araucarian language, of which the vocabulary is mainly Spanish, but the structure is purely native, and which, for that reason, is to be classed as an American, not as a European language ; or, to take another example, probably more exact as well as more familiar, Dante's poetry under this aspect may be compared to an English Elizabethan or Jacobean manor-house, which gives one rather a Gothic than a Renaissance idea, though almost every detail is classical. The mixture of styles is very impure, no doubt, and very incorrect, but it is very fascinating. But after the time of Dante, Greek and Latin poured in like a flood. The Italian plants were choked by the full-grown exotics which were transplanted into the soil, and which had not life enough in themselves to take their places. In fact, the ground, which had profited largely by the sprinkling of classical guano which had been applied to it at the beginning of the century, could not stand the cart-loads upon cart-loads which were emptied into it by Petrarch and his contemporaries ; and though Europe was benefited, Italy suffered.

ART.
1250-1300.

Very different was the case with art. The theory which I have adopted in regard to it is, that its seasons are later than those of the political history, though the same dates are applicable in both cases ; so that the period 1250-1400, which is the political summer, may be considered as the artistic spring. The subdivision, 1250-1300, to which I have given the title "Clearing the Decks for Action"—or, in other words, that of preparation for the fourteenth century—has very much the same character in the history of art. It opens with an outburst of classicalism in Nicola Pisano. His classicalism is a good deal more pro-

Nicola
Pisano.

nounced than that of Dante, but still it does not overpower the old Lombard element ; and all through the half-century in question the two principles run side by side. While Nicola, and the school of sculpture which he founded, embodied the new spirit from which the great schools of Italian art were to arise, the old traditional recollections of Byzantium still continued to inspire the Tuscan painters. I do not know why it was that Painting should have lagged behind Sculpture in its advance, but it certainly was the case that it did. Not only do the works of contemporaneous painters and sculptors look as if there was the distance of a generation between them, but we also find a similar difference in the works of the same individual. The earliest sepulchral monument of mediæval Italy that I have seen, or perhaps exists, that of Pope Gregory the Tenth, is a most splendid and striking work of the new Italian style of this period ; and it is difficult to believe that the man to whom we are indebted for it was that Margaritone of Arezzo, whose painted Madonnas and crucifixes are of the stiffest and most ill-favoured type of Byzantinism. And an even more striking instance is supplied by the great Nicola himself. After one has been admiring his pulpit in the Baptistery of Pisa, which, though not absolutely perfect in the proportions of the figures, far surpasses in grace, freshness, and correctness anything that was produced by the great sculptors of Italy for more than a century after his time, it is not a little strange to be taken to the Accademia of that same town, and shown the picture there which goes by his name, and of which Margaritone himself might have been ashamed.

Yet if the painting of the later "Dugento" was backward, it is not to be understood that it was not very admirable, though in a different fashion from its contemporary sculpture ; nor must its fame rest on the performances of Margaritone and Nicola Pisano. The Byzantine type, which still maintained its ground, was capable of being

Sculpture
and Paint-
ing.

worked out with very great beauty. It neglected the study of form and pictorial effect, which perhaps its artists were not capable, even if they had not been careless, of attaining, and concentrated itself on expression. The requirements of the age were principally religious. It was hardly to be expected that the worshipper, who gazed with semi-idolatrous devotion on the figure of the Saviour or the Madonna above the altar at which he knelt, should be very scrupulous in inquiring whether the proportions of the limbs or the folds of the drapery were correctly drawn ; nor would he have been competent, even if he had been inclined, to criticise. Expression, its purity, sweetness, holiness, divinity,—these were the things which the people cared for, and these were the objects which the painters strove, and not unsuccessfully, to attain. What the amount of their success was, is a question to which different answers may be given ; but, for myself, I must say I have a great affection for these old painters. In its strange and unearthly beauty (the expression is Lord Lindsay's), and perhaps more than beauty, I do not know anything that surpasses, and few that equal, the Madonna of Or' San Michele by the Sienese Ugolino ; and I feel as if I could understand, though not go the length of, the raptures of the people of Florence, who carried in a sort of triumphal procession Cimabue's celebrated picture to its resting-place in Sta Maria Novella.

Cimabue—to use a phrase which has been applied to Lord Dalhousie's Indian government—closed a period. In the fourteenth century, and at its very commencement, art underwent a vast change. The concurrent schools, the sculpture of Pisa, the painting and mosaic of Florence and Siena, gave birth, about the year 1300, to a new style different from either, though combining something of both. It seems to me, therefore, that “Preparation”—which I look upon as the characteristic of the political history of the half-century 1250-1300—may also be the name applied,

though in a somewhat different sense, to the history of its art.

It perhaps savours rather of putting the cart before the horse, to speak of Sculpture and Painting before Architecture. It is, perhaps, an excuse for doing so, that while the latter—the eldest of the arts—has hitherto claimed a priority, not only in time but in importance also, she begins about this period to be overshadowed in this respect by her younger sister, and therefore may be considered last. I confess that my omission of her, in the first instance, was an oversight, and that this excuse, though the fact is true enough, has been put forward principally to save myself from the trouble of writing what I have written over again. Still, as I say, the fact is true. Hitherto Sculpture has been little more than a decorative appendage to Architecture. Nicola gave her the power to stand alone ; and from this period onward she attracts more notice, and is sought by more votaries, than the elder art. Yet very much the same story may be told of one as of the other. At the same time that the old Lombard Sculpture found its domain invaded and its supremacy contested by a rival of foreign extraction, which, after disputing the ground for half a century, was finally to prevail, but in prevailing to catch something of the spirit of its supplanted antagonist, Architecture was undergoing a change of a strictly analogous kind ; and the worker of the change in the one art, as in the other, was Nicola Pisano. As a sculptor, he drew his inspiration from the classic nations of old ; as an architect, he drew it from the descendants of those by whom those nations were overthrown, and became the founder of the style known as Italian Gothic. I suppose few will think that he was as successful in the latter art as in the former. In the one case he inaugurated what his successors carried out into a perfect fusion of all that was best in the old and in the new, and which has been the foundation of the art of mediæval Italy

Architec-
ture.

Nicola
Pisano.

Italian
Gothic.

and of modern Europe ; in the other, he produced merely a juxtaposition of incompatible styles, often very beautiful, but always rather unsatisfactory. The attempt to unite in the same building the vertical and horizontal principles was one which no amount of beauty of material or gracefulness of execution could render quite successful ; and the architecture of this half-century seems rather as if it did not know its own mind. After the period of transition it obtained a firmer footing, and, as we shall see, produced in the fourteenth century some of the most perfect and beautiful buildings that exist. But it never struck its roots very deeply ; and it withered away under the influence of classicalism at the very time that, under that influence, Sculpture was developing itself into the glories of the Quattrocento.

I think I have made out a fair case for the *general* parallel between History and Art during the subdivision 1250-1300, claiming for both the quality of being transitional from the character of the century 1150-1250 to that of the century 1300-1400. But I stand committed to something more ; for I started by saying that I should try and carry the parallel into something like detail. I have tried to do so with regard to the art and the history of the First Period. Let us try again here.

The theory is, that in proportion as a state is free—in proportion, that is, as the energies of her citizens are allowed to have their natural expansion—so will be the excellence of her art ; that among states of this kind art will flourish most where the power, the earnestness, and the courage are highest : and that for a state to partake in the general artistic advance of the country, she must be national in sympathy and feeling.

Parallel
carried into
detail.

Now, I do not want to write the fourth chapter over again in the Appendix for you, but I ask you to recollect the upshot of it—namely, that by the end of this half-century,

Northern Italy had divided itself into three separate camps, two of them in close alliance with one another, at least in principle; and the third the enemy of both. The allies are the democratic republics of Tuscany and Liguria, and the aristocratic republic of Venice. The hostile camp is that of Tyranny, which occupies the space between them, and, with the exception of the two cities of Bologna and Padua, covers the whole of *Æmilia* and Lombardy. My theory forces me to leave out of the parallel the last group, as being likely to have no art at all, unless we can find any at Padua and Bologna, and to expect that the art of the other two will be very different in character, both on account of the divergence of their institutions, and also because Venice at this time holds herself almost entirely aloof from Italian politics, and is content to work out her national life for herself, while the only external relations which she cares to cultivate are with the Greeks and Saracens of the Levant, either for purposes of commerce, or in connection with her *Ægean* possessions. We shall expect, too, to find some differences, as we did in the First Period, between the art of the different cities of Tuscany. It may be as well to mention that we shall find nothing to serve our purpose in Liguria. Genoa was great at most things, but she had no turn for art.

In the political history of this section, which I have Pisa. tried to sketch in the fourth chapter, I claim, at its commencement, the foremost place among the republics of the Peninsula for Pisa. Her power on the mainland renders her of more importance than Venice and Genoa; her greatness on the sea gives her the precedence over the other cities of Tuscany. It is on the latter element that her glory principally lies; but, as a Tuscan republic, she is much concerned with the politics of Italy. One might expect, therefore, to find, if her political position is to be reflected in her art, that she should be the leader of the

Peninsula in this respect also ; that she should be national in her art, sympathising with the feelings of the rest of her country, and therefore drawing to herself *their* sympathies and their allegiance ; and, at the same time, that she should blend with this character a capacity for drinking in influences from abroad, of assimilating them and reproducing them in a new form, and thus presenting them for the acceptance of Italy. Her Ghibellinism will, we may anticipate, lead to her being open to inspiration from the land of the chiefs whom she so devotedly serves ; and the general effect of her seaward tendency will be to impress a wider, freer, fresher tone on her work than on that of those states whose vision, turned inland, is bounded by the wall of the Apennines. And this is exactly the case. It was no mere accident, as I cannot help believing, which made Nicola her citizen. It is, of course, possible to follow out a fanciful idea too far ; and it would be absurd to say, in the confident and dogmatic style so common in the present day, that in no other place but a Ghibelline city could the architecture of the Germans strike root, or that for a man to have been able to emancipate himself from the trammels of Byzantinism, and draw from the works of the ancient world influences which should enable him to found a new style, he must have been born in a region where he might derive inspiration from the sea ; but it was natural and fitting that such should be the case. I feel as if I had not said half enough about Nicola. He was not only the father of modern art, but he actually carried it, in sculpture at least, to a pitch of excellence at which his successors were unable to maintain it, and which was never recovered till the days of Ghiberti. There is no monument, ancient or modern, which it gives me greater pleasure to look at than the pulpit in the Baptistery of Pisa. The freedom of the action, the moulding of the forms, the skill with which the figures are grouped, the grandeur of the heads, can hardly be sur-

passed ; and, at the same time, there is a *naïveté* about it which is rather helped by the want of correctness which is sometimes shown in the proportions; and the “stumpiness” and top-heaviness of some of the figures—a not uncommon fault in early art. His “Arca di San Domenico” at Bologna is perhaps even more remarkable for the skilfulness of its execution, though I cannot help thinking that it does not quite come up to the Pisan pulpit as bearing the stamp of greatness.

Pisa, then, is the first city of Italy at this period, in her art as well as in her political position, and she is playing an imperial part. Before and during the First Period of our history she has founded a new school of architecture under the auspices of Buschetto : through Bonanno and Biduino she has carried the old Lombard sculpture to the highest pitch of excellence of which it was capable ; and by means of Giunta, and the painter of S. Piero in Grado, she heads the revival of Italian painting. At the opening of the Second Period she still maintains her ground, and more than maintains it ; for, as I have been saying, through Nicola she becomes the parent of Italian-Gothic architecture, and gives to Sculpture a new soul, which in process of time is caught by Painting also. But not for her is the ultimate supremacy reserved. Towards the end of the half-Battle of Meloria. century with which we are dealing, her last and fiercest war with Genoa was terminated by the crushing defeat of Meloria. We have seen the effect which it produced on Its effects. her, not only in reducing her to a lower place in the scale of Italian powers, but also in changing her character. She is not destroyed by it ; and in subsequent wars with Florence she shows that her ancient energy, though forced into a new channel, still remains to her : but the life of Pisa was on the sea ; and when she can no longer draw inspiration from thence, the buoyancy and freshness of her old nature are gone. Henceforward she is, as it were, soured and

disappointed : her subsequent history is a sort of grim struggle for existence : her very successes, when she gains any, seem hardly to give her any satisfaction or pleasure ; and though she has still the spirit which refuses to bow the knee before the foreigner, she has no longer the spirit which can throw itself into forms of beauty for very joyousness ; and her art died out, because it had nothing to express.

Florence
and Siena.

The contest for supremacy in Tuscany between the Guelf and Ghibelline principles is waged during this half-century mainly by Florence and Siena. The balance between them—at first held not unevenly, and at one time violently depressed in favour of the latter by the battle of Monteperto—begins slowly to incline towards Florence ; and by the end of the century she is clearly the leading state of Tuscany. The history of their political rivalry is not unlike that of their rivalry in art. During the first period, Siena has been foremost. Her painter, Guido da Siena, disputes the primacy of the Pisan Giunta ; and she obtains a yet higher glory in the mosaicist Torrita ; while it is only at the end of the period that the Florentine Tafi makes his appearance. But during the half-century 1250-1300 Florence gains ground in the race : she catches up her rival, and runs fairly neck and neck ; and at length, in the days of Cimabue, finds herself slightly in advance. They are both of them still in the old track, still under the influence of Byzantium : they carry the style which they inherit to greater and greater perfection ; but there is a point beyond which the landward cities, by their own unassisted efforts, cannot reach ; the impulse which is to set them going on a fresher and more splendid career must come from Pisa.

Venice.

I do not think I can say much about Venice at this time. Her eyes, as I have said, are completely turned throughout the thirteenth century towards the East ; and she meddles as little with the affairs of the peninsula to which she

belongs as she can. As might be expected from this, her art is entirely Byzantine—not only, like the cities of Western Italy, in mosaic and painting, but in everything. The theory which I have just expressed is, that Florence and Siena adhere to their Byzantine models because they know no better, because their vision is shut in, because the atmosphere they breathe is as yet too confined; but wherever they get a chance, they expatiate freely—they have given even to their mosaics and pictures, which are still Byzantine, something of a Western spirit. Torrita and Cimabue are immeasurably above the eighth and ninth century mosaicists of Rome and the painters of Mount Athos; and in architecture they have long since followed the lead of Pisa, both in the time of Buschetto and in that of Nicola. But the Byzantinism of Venice springs not so much from ignorance as from preference; and it is shown most in the department in which Western Italy shows it least, or rather does not show it at all—namely, in her architecture.

Finally, I gave some reason to expect that there would be something to say about Padua and Bologna. The former has claimed for herself some attention intellectually in the First Period, by means of her university; and this claim she still possesses, though I know not whether any great writers belong to her at this time; but her art has not yet appeared. The spirit of liberty which animates her long after it has disappeared from the rest of Lombardy, does not produce its natural effects in this way till after it may be said to have expired. It dies in giving birth to its offspring. It is different with Bologna. We have seen in the First Period that *Æmilia* plays no unimportant part in the revival of the Italian intellect, and, in fact, is the first place in which civilisation takes root permanently. The seeds of life sprout up everywhere. Ravenna, Piacenza, Ferrara, Modena—above all, Parma—all of them are illustrated by

Padua and
Bologna.

names of lawyers, architects, sculptors, painters, of more or less excellence: but the young shoots are nipped everywhere by tyranny; and all the intelligence and the genius of that region concentrate themselves more and more upon Bologna. A school of painters begins to make its appearance there. It could not, indeed, compare with those of Tuscany; Bologna was not steady enough in her adherence to the cause of freedom to lead us to expect that it would, if my theory is to hold; but still it is by no means to be despised. I fancy that Oderigi, whom Dante meets in Purgatory, though he takes his name from Agobbio, is to be considered a member, even if he was not rather the founder, of it; and his pupil, Franco Bolognese, held a high repute towards the end of the century. But I believe that none of the works of these artists remain; and the little that I have to say about Bologna belongs rather to the fourteenth century.

I think I have said all that need be said about the period of Preparation. I have done so at much greater length than I meant to have done in this Appendix, and, in fact, at nearly as great a length as I should have done if I had ever got to the chapter on the art of this period in the due course of the sketch. I have been drawn on to do so; and I feel as if my correspondent would not object, or be otherwise than interested in the subject of my remarks, though she may perhaps criticise their perfect correctness and justice.

Ruskin says, I think, in the ‘Stones of Venice,’ that Dante is the central figure in the history of the world. I have just been turning over the pages to find the passage; and though I have not found it, I have found something even more to the point—to wit, that there is “a kind of central year about which we may consider the energy of the middle ages to have been gathered; . . . namely, the year 1300, the ‘mezzo del cammin’ of the life of Dante.” He

considers that date to be the centre of mediæval thought and mediæval ideas ; and whether we consider it in the light of a centre or a starting-point, it is probably the most important one in mediæval history. It is at this date that, not with the view of exhibiting any parallel, or working out any theory, but simply because it seemed necessary for the proper telling of the story, I have, in the first of my *entr'actes*, tried to give a short sketch of the history of the great institution round which, even more than round the Empire, the life of the middle ages was grouped—the Papacy. The Papacy had been the great source of civilisation and intelligence all through the latter part of that time. In what may pre-eminently be called the “Dark Ages”—the interval of obscurity which stretches from Augustulus to Charlemagne, a period of lawlessness and disorder, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes, when the arts of civilisation were dead, or at least sleeping, when the languages of Europe were unborn, when the nations of Europe were not—she made hardly any sign ; perhaps she emitted a feeble glimmer of light, which only served to render the darkness visible ; but that was all. But after that period, after the civil power had made, in the person of Charlemagne, the attempt to revive society, and to introduce into the chaos some semblance of order built upon right and justice, and had proved unequal to the task, she stood forward to claim it as her own ; and for 400 or 450 years she headed the advance of the world. How well she played her part, and how great has been the obligation under which modern Europe lies to her, has been fully acknowledged by the writers, Protestant as well as Romanist, of the present century ; but there was a point at which her mission, as an instrument of civilisation, ceased ; and that was the date of which we are now speaking. In the third chapter of the sketch, I fix the date 1250 as the central date of the Papacy ; but that is looking at her as

With regard
to the
Papacy.

regards herself, her power and greatness. As regards the relations which she bore to the history of the world, we must consider her central date to be 1300. From the time of the break-up of Charlemagne's empire, Rome had been more and more the mistress of Christendom. Enemy after enemy, able, powerful, resolute, had risen up against her, and one after another they had gone down. 1250 witnessed the consummation of her glory, in the termination of the most formidable of all her struggles, by the most complete of all her triumphs. Then followed fifty years, not of peace, but of success, during which, though she knew it not, she was hurrying down a certain, though hardly perceptible, descent; and then came the tremendous crash which befel in the days of Boniface the Eighth. From that terrible fall she arose, but dizzy, crippled, and powerless. For two centuries and a half she reposed in half-stunned and inglorious torpor, without any attempt to climb again to the heights from which she had fallen: the peril of destruction by the Reformers of Germany roused her at the end of that time to something like a renewal of her old activity: but the hold which she had possessed over the mind of Christendom was gone; the glory of leading the van in the progress of Europe had passed to other hands; and the date at which it did so was 1300. From that point may be held to date the life of modern Europe.

I am afraid you will think I am writing Chap. V. over again; but I do not think I am exactly. That was written because, as I say, it seemed that a sketch of the history of the Papacy was desirable in that place in order to explain the effect which the quarrel between Boniface and Philip had upon her fortunes. My point now is, that at or about A. D. 1300, the civilisation of Europe entered into a new phase, and was animated by a new spirit. From its first beginnings, or almost from its first beginnings, its spirit had

been ecclesiastical : from 1300 to the present day its spirit has been secular.

If A.D. 1300 is the starting-point of the intellectual life of modern Europe, it is also the starting-point of the political life of mediæval Italy. I need not point out again how by this time the three principles of government have each its representative among the Italian states ; how those states seem, with few exceptions, to have chosen their part ; and how the political differences answer to geographical ones. It is at this point, therefore, that the real history of the Italians begins. Hitherto they have been engaged, first, in emancipating themselves from a state of pupillage under the Empire, and, secondly, in forming their own characters. Henceforth they are to exhibit themselves in the collision of actual life ; and in that collision the principal figure round which the whole of the action is gathered is that of the Republic of Florence. Up to this point her position has not been so great. She has, as I have pointed out, being growing and growing in strength and importance, and more and more claiming our attention during the transitional half-century ; but it is not till the commencement of the fourteenth century that she bursts into her full blaze of glory as the chiefest of all the Italian republics, the leader of the army of freedom.

With regard
to Italy.

When, at the beginning of the ninth chapter, I drew Florence. attention to Florence as the centre of our history, during what I call the Period of Summer, I was not thinking of her in any other capacity than her political one ; and so far from wishing to strain a point in order to suit a theory, I think the parallel had at that time rather gone out of my head ; and yet, if I were to wish to describe her position in relation either to Italian literature or to Italian art, I do not know that I could express it better than by writing over again what I have said about her position in relation to Italian politics. It was at this date that the glory of

Italian literature, after passing during the First Period and the transitional half-century through the hands of Ciullo d'Alcamo, of the Hohenstaufen princes, of Guido Guinicegli, of Prinzivalle Doria, of Folgore di San Gemignano, of Brunetto Latini, Jacopo da Lentino, and Guido Cavalcanti, at length culminated in the 'Divina Commedia;' and it is at this date that the portrait of the poet who wrote it, painted in fresco on the walls of the Palace of the Bargello of Florence by Giotto, marks a fresh epoch in the advance of Italian art.

What Tuscany was to the rest of Italy, Florence was to the rest of Tuscany. In that region, the microcosm of the intellect and civilisation of the peninsula, the part which, in the larger field, was played by different provinces, was played over again by different cities. In the third chapter, you may remember (and in case you do not, I may as well tell you over again) that I picked out three districts in which the cultivation of intellect and fancy dawned in succession: the first, brilliant and precocious, owing her early development mainly to being open to influences from abroad, to her possession of classic monuments, and to the intimacy of her connection with the house of Hohenstaufen, and finally blighted by causes exclusively political; the second shining with a light less splendid, but more durable; and the third, the last to appear, but destined far to surpass both the others—to outshine the brilliancy of the first, and to outlive the vitality of the second. We have traced this out in science, in poetry, and in art; and we have found that in all of them the same order is followed, and at the same periods. In the reduced copy which we may see in Tuscany, the similarity cannot be found strongly marked in any department but in that of art: but in that department the parallel is clear and distinct. I think I need hardly say that Pisa corresponds to Sicily, and Siena to Æmilia, while the part of Tuscany herself is played by Florence.

About the year 1300, the Italian-Gothic style of architecture, first introduced by the Pisan Nicola, at length, after about a half-century of transition and progress, during which it had by degrees been superseding the old Lombard style all over Tuscany, fixed itself at Florence, and in the hands of her citizen, Arnolfo di Lapo, began to rear the building which, in Western Italy at least, is its chief type and representative, the Cathedral of that city. That great edifice has, to my eye, fewer of the incongruities and contradictions which rather bother one in those of Siena and Orvieto, and half-a-hundred others; even its cupola does not mar its effect very much, though I am afraid that if I had good taste I ought to think that it does; nor would it much affect the question if it did, as it was not erected till the classical revival of the Quattrocento had set in. The most perfect Gothic building in the world, according to Ruskin, is the Campanile or Bell Tower which stands close by: but though the date of that building is some thirty or forty years later, it is formed on the model of the Cathedral; and though the hands are those of Giotto, the voice is that of Arnolfo.

But Gothic architecture in Italy achieved at this time another triumph not less splendid and not less important than the Cathedral of Florence. The life of Venice, as we have seen, has hitherto lain almost entirely apart from that of the rest of Italy; and her history, both political and intellectual, has to be considered separately. It is true that she perfects her constitution at the same time that the other states of Italy perfect theirs, and that Pietro Gradenigo is the contemporary of Giano della Bella. But it seems to me as if this coincidence was almost accidental. Nothing in her history answers to the Italian spring, or to the first or transitional month of the summer. Her growth has been steady, noiseless, and slow, like the growth of an oak: states, empires, and systems have arisen and fallen around her,

and their rise and fall have affected her little more than as dates to mark the even tenor of her course ; and side by side with the growth of the republic has been the growth of the aristocracy. Her foreign relations have been almost entirely with the East ; and her art has reflected the tendency of mind which they exhibit. Once, indeed, her adoption of the cause of Pope Alexander against Frederick Barbarossa, caused her to interfere for a moment in the affairs of Italy ; and the immediate though transitory effect which this produced on her art, as shown in the mosaics of the Cappella Zeno, is a sort of presumption that she had a real sympathy with the West, and that, though her tastes were Oriental, her heart was Italian. Whether accidentally or not, the year 1300 was a decisive year in her fortunes as well as in those of the other states of the peninsula ; and from that time forward she begins to connect herself with them. The attempt which she made in 1308 to possess herself of Ferrara, is evidence that a desire for a place among the powers of Italy had taken root in her heart. Before this desire or feeling had had the opportunity of colouring her policy, it had found its expression in her architecture. The new settlement of the constitution entailed enlargements, or at least modifications, in the building wherein her rulers and councillors met to deliberate, important enough to render it necessary that part of it should be pulled down and rebuilt ; and in 1301, the first year of the century, the first stone was laid of a renewed wing of the Ducal Palace, which stamped the change which had come over her government at home and her policy abroad, more markedly still upon her art. The Byzantine architecture had been replaced by Gothic. The style which, after a century of trial and progress, had slowly won its way in Western Italy to the point at which it attained completeness in the Cathedral of Florence, sprang at the same date into full and sudden perfection in Eastern Italy, in the

Ducal Palace of Venice. The wing I speak of, built under the auspices of Gradenigo, has, like its Byzantine predecessor, been destroyed, in order to make room for a third style, that of the Cinquecento : but its spirit survives : the greater part of the Palace was built or restored before that style had come into fashion ; and in the most prominent portions of it, those from which our ideas of it are taken, we may see not so much a development as an imitation of the lost Palace of the founder of the Venetian constitution. I say an imitation, for, unlike the Gothic of Western Italy, that of Venice, having attained perfection at one blow, remained pretty nearly immovable till it fell before the revival of classic architecture ; and it seems to me at least a curious coincidence that its fate in that respect reflects pretty closely that of the policy of which I consider it in a sort of way the sign. The new westward tendencies of the Republic, represented in her history by the invasion or purchase (call it which you will) of Ferrara, as in her art by the contemporaneous appearance of Gothic in her Ducal Palace, met with a sharp and decided check ; and they remained in abeyance till she was urged by the Florentines on the one hand and the Carraras on the other, to join in the attack on Mastino della Scala ; nor did they revive even then in the same degree of keenness as in the matter of Ferrara. In the earlier instance she seems to have been actuated by a desire to become an Italian Power : in the later one, by a desire to protect herself against the aggressiveness of a formidable neighbour, the growth of whose power she had watched with something very like apathy, till she was stirred by the double incitements of the encroachments which he made on her salt monopoly, and the alliance which at that moment was eagerly pressed upon her to aid her in obtaining security and revenge.

Gothic architecture at Venice wears a very different aspect from that which it wears in Tuscany ; and without dis-

Venetian
and Tuscan
Gothic com-
pared.

paraging in any way the glorious monuments which, in the hands of such men as Arnolfo, Giotto, and Orcagna of Florence, and Agostino and Agnolo of Siena, it achieved in the West, I think that, on the whole, the preference should be given to its Eastern development. A variety of reasons may be given for this. Venetian Gothic, bursting at once into the fulness of life, like Pallas Athené from the head of Zeus, bears about her no trace of that painful struggle between opposing styles which so sadly hampers the Tuscan Gothic ; and therefore may with greater justice lay claim to the character of perfection. She compares advantageously also with her Western rival, in that her chief type and representative is to be found in a civil rather than in an ecclesiastical building. I will try and say more about this presently. And finally, there is a fulness, a luxuriance of ornament, a depth of light and shade, going fully up to, but never beyond, the limits of grace and good taste to which, I think, we find no resemblance on the other side of the Apennines ; and this, which perhaps is a difference rather than a superiority, expresses a divergence of character which goes very deeply down, and is apparent almost everywhere in the relations between Venice and Florence, in their character, in their history, in their institutions, in their monuments, and in their paintings.

Sculpture.

Sculpture, at the date at which we are pausing, is still to a certain extent represented at Pisa. The battle of Meloria, as I explained just now, did not destroy, though it blighted her ; and as in politics, so in art, she drags on her existence wearily, still commanding respect and admiration from her tenacity, but having lost the aspirations of her earlier day. The succession of Nicola kept up the reputation of their founder, though with less of genius : but they became more and more separated from the spot whence their school arose. Giovanni Pisano, son of the great Nicola, the heir of his father's position, and of a faint reflex of his

Succession
of Nicola
Pisano.

father's genius, became the chief among the sculptors of Italy of his day ; and many of his works, among which I have had occasion to mention, in my fifth chapter, the tomb of Pope Benedict the Eleventh, remain to show that he must have had powers of no mean order. But though he worked much in his native city, both as sculptor and architect, the tendency to draw away from Pisa was apparent, even in his time. He was invited to Siena, and founded in that city a school which, though it never equalled the glory of Nicola, lasted long after Pisa had ceased to have a school of her own, and maintained a respectable though subordinate competition with that of Florence : and I here beg leave to remind you of the relation of the art of the three republics, and how I suggested the parallel of that between Sicily, Æmilia, and Tuscany. Florence, as usual, came last, a generation behind Siena, as Siena was a generation behind Pisa. If the school of Siena was founded by Giovanni, son of Nicola, that of Florence was founded by Andrea, pupil of Giovanni. I should say founded in a mechanical sense : for as soon as Andrea touched the soil of Florence, he fell under the influence of one greater than himself, who drew from him lessons in the execution of his works, but communicated in return much more than he received, and taking the lead out of his instructor's hands, not only infused into him a new spirit and feeling, but placed himself at the head of the art of the whole peninsula. I need not say that I am speaking of Giotto.

Something analogous to the " Rule of Three " which I have tried to make out, first in the case of three provinces, and then in the case of three cities, may be seen in quite another department—that of the three arts. Of course it is a mere fancy, and I do not pretend that the likeness is at all exact, or that, if it was, it would be anything but pure accident : but looking at it as a fancy, it may help one's recollection to make use of it as an illustration. Architecture,

the first to appear, is extremely subject to influence from abroad, and is very early checked—not, indeed, like Sicily and like Pisa, to be blighted, and never hold up her head again, but to undergo changes, and to be cast into new forms. Sculpture, the second, coming in originally as a handmaid to Architecture, pursues a steady forward career, subject to none of the violent revolutions which are experienced by her elder sister. And finally, Painting, the last in the field, waits for the impulse to be given to her by Sculpture, and then, taking up the torch, carries it forward with an energy which draws attention almost exclusively on herself. This order may be traced even in the Art of the dark ages. It is clear enough in that of the revival. What Nicola Pisano was to Buschetto, that was Giotto to Nicola Pisano. In him the new spirit, which was displaying itself in many forms besides those of Art, and which had been breathed into both architecture and sculpture, though in different ways, by Nicola, reached the art in which it was to have the freest and most varied development, the art “*ch'alluminare é chiamata in Parigi.*” And the date at which it does so is our old friend 1300.

Nicola re-
presents sc-
cular spirit

And what was that spirit? Can we find anything in the state of the world at the period we are speaking of, any tone and tendency of public feeling, which shall answer to the change effected in architecture by the introduction of Italian Gothic about the year 1250, to the contemporaneous revival of sculpture by the infusion into it of something of classic breadth and freedom, and to the results which, after fifty years of growth, stamped the beginning of the fourteenth century as the epoch at which the arts were definitely launched into that new career which, though often broken and interrupted, has lasted in one form or another down to the present day? I think we can. It seems to me that these facts in the history of the arts correspond too closely, both in time and in their nature, to the

reaction against the dominion of the Church, which commenced in 1250 and triumphed in 1303, the year of Pope Boniface's humiliation, to be considered as mere accidental coincidences. That they correspond in their nature, as well as in the time at which they took place, perhaps will be clear enough to you without any explanation of mine ; but in case it should not, I will enter a little more fully into it, to show what I think.

That the change which Nicola worked in Sculpture was in the secular or anti-ecclesiastical direction, is clear enough in the face of it. The influence of classic art is to be seen in almost every line that he wrought, at least in his earlier performances, in the style of which he was the founder. By degrees the intensity of it was subdued, and, becoming tinged with a little of the spirit of its opponent, was merged in the new style of Italy, powerfully animating it, but not obtrusively prominent : but at first it was almost the only apparent element. The first, and, as I have said, perhaps the most admirable of his later works, the Pulpit of the Pisan Baptistery, might, but for the subjects represented, and for some shortcomings in execution, be almost taken for a work of antiquity ; and it was remarked with much point by a relation of ours, who must be held to know something of these matters, that the Madonna is like a Juno. The same criticism applies to a Madonna of Giotto's at present in the Florentine Accademia, which, according to Lord Lindsay, is, as might be expected from the nature of the case, as well as from the analogy of Nicola, that painter's earliest surviving work. In Giotto, as well as in his predecessor Nicola, the direct classical influence, strongly pronounced at first, gradually wears off ; but though it ceases to supply him with models, it still affects the bent of his mind. His later works are not classical in style, and probably not in feeling ; but the change which has come over his art is complete. I do not know that its character

can be expressed better than in the words of Lord Lindsay. Its feeling is *dramatic*, while that of his predecessors, Byzantine and Romanesque alike, had been *contemplative*. It was not irreligious art, like that which classicalism produced at a later period—very much the reverse ; but it is the religion of the domestic hearth rather than that of the cloister, the religion of the people, rather than that of the priests ; in fact, but that it sounds rather like clap-trap, I should say that its character is Protestant.

in Architec-
ture.

It may not be so clear that the rising secular spirit is fittingly expressed in the new style of Architecture. The general notion of Gothic is that it is distinctly ecclesiastical ; and, in fact, that was the principal reason that was alleged against building the new Public Offices in London in that style. Lord Palmerston went so far as to say that it was fit for nothing but a Jesuit college, a sentiment which showed that our noble Premier could have known very little of what he was talking about ; it is a pity he did not give point to his observation by explaining what particular Jesuit college he was alluding to. But in Italy, at least, Gothic was certainly not ecclesiastical. The secular buildings in that style are very much more satisfactory than the churches, because that conflict of opposing principles which so much mars the beauty of the latter, is in the others not apparent. You may recollect that one of the reasons which I gave for preferring the Gothic of Venice to that of Florence was, that the type of the one is to be found in a palace, while that of the other is to be found in a cathedral ; and I will go further, and say that—though it is true that the representative building of Tuscan Gothic, that which most exhibits its peculiarities while keeping down its faults, and exhibits them on the largest scale and adorned with the greatest beauty, is the Duomo of Florence, together with its Campanile—a more perfect though less characteristic specimen of it may be found in the Palazzo Vecchio of that city,

built at about the same time, and under the direction of the same architect. And I think that the same remark applies still more forcibly to the Cathedral and Public Palace of Siena.

But I will not flinch from meeting the question of the spirit expressed by Italian Gothic fully and fairly. It may be a sufficient, but it is hardly a satisfactory, evidence of its secular character, to say that it succeeded better in civil than in ecclesiastical buildings : the reason why it does so is partly, if not principally, to be found in the fact that it is hampered by Lombard traditions, of which, in its churches, it cannot quite rid itself ; and if architecture is to reflect a new spirit, it must be in consequence of what is new in its style, not in consequence of what is old. So that one might expect that whatever is Italian in Nicola Pisano's school represents what existed before ; and that the growth of the reaction would be expressed by the greater and greater prominence of Transalpine innovation, and that the burden of the parallel must be cast upon what is purely Gothic. At the risk of being prosy, I must qualify the word "secular." It is a shorter one than "anti-ecclesiastical," but not so appropriate. As far as it means "non-ecclesiastical," the appearance of the character which it designates is probably due to Italian influence : as far as it means "anti-ecclesiastical," the character is Gothic. I feel I have not got this clearly. Perhaps I may make it more so as I proceed.

Those who love symbolism have traced, in the character of the style which, south of the Alps, is called Lombard, and north of the Alps is called Norman, a type of the Church, strong, solid, and indestructible, resting in contemplative repose amidst the storms by which the outer world is convulsed, and inviting all to seek refuge under the shade of her massy arches, and the protection of her roofs and walls, eternal as the rocks from which they have been hewn. This character is allowed, in the Southern

Character of
Lombard
architec-
ture.

division, to be combined with a modifying element of grace and lightness, the result of the old classic recollections of the land wherein she is placed, which temper with a more cheerful and intellectual air the somewhat gloomy, though not frowning, grandeur of the North. To go on with our symbolism, we may call this the expression of the secular character, which, though kept in due subordination to the Church, was, in Italy, never entirely lost. Towards the middle of the eleventh century, this ecclesiastical style is inspired with a new life. It does not change its character—it does not cease to be a symbol of the Church ; but it expresses the idea with a fresh energy, expands the scale on which it works, and, covering itself with profuse decorations, colonnades, wall-patterns, bas-reliefs—following, but never transcending, the lines of the building which they adorn — becomes the appropriate representative of the Church no longer in repose, but in action.

Of Gothic
architec-
ture.

The symbolism of which Gothic is held to be expressive is different. The idea which it conveys is that of the aspirations of human souls towards heaven. To refer again to Lord Lindsay, whose book I happen to have beside me, “the upward spring, the vertical tendency, is the key of the whole ;” and afterwards, comparing it with the Lombard style, he says that the two together represent the two aspects of the Christian life—that of contemplation and that of action. I fully admit the justice of this ; and I fancy that the same thought has occurred to many other writers. But I know not whether it has occurred to any one that they may be regarded, not only in a co-ordinate, but in a mutually opposing aspect ; and for our present purpose, and for their relation, not to individual minds, but to the general mind of Christendom, it must be in the latter aspect that we shall have to regard them.

Gothic is multitudinous. It sounds an exaggeratedly long word, but for this I trust to be forgiven. Its charac-

teristic is no longer repose, but unrest—no longer unity, but endless variety. The exuberance which, in the older architecture, is subordinate to the general effect of the whole, and the removal of which, though it would grievously mar, would not destroy it, seems, in Gothic, to be of the very essence of the style. Instead of the ordered lines of the Lombard church, the colonnades rising tier above tier along the façade, the level outline of the roof, the deep quiet and contemplativeness of the dome, we have the pointed arches, the steep gables, the high pitch of the roof, the endless luxuriance of tracery, of towers and spires, of pinnacles and buttresses. The bas-reliefs and statues have not the effect of being ornamental, but of being the result of growth, and as if they could not help being there. Every cusp, every finial, every moulding, is different from its neighbour, and if there is similarity, it seems to be by accident.

In Lombard Architecture variety may be indulged in, though in strict subordination to unity. In Gothic Architecture unity is to be attained, but it must be developed out of variety. Lombard, save where it is controlled or softened by classic influence, is the counterpart of the eternity of the rocks of basalt ; Gothic, save where it is controlled by the same influences, is the counterpart of the luxuriance of the forest. Finally, and this is the point I wish to come to, Lombard represents the religion of the Church ; Gothic represents the religion of the free intellect. Which is the best of the two, whether morally or æsthetically, may be a question which will be variously answered, the answer depending on the temperament of the person or the nation to whom the question is put ; but that there is such a difference as I speak of there is no doubt, and hardly less so that that of the arts corresponds with the moral one. Lombard Architecture is the expression (to use Dean Milman's phrase) of Latin Christianity, which has given rise to the Church of Rome. Gothic Architecture is the expression of what is

Lombard
and Gothic
architec-
ture com-
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Lombard
architecture
that of the
Papacy—
Gothic of
Protestant-
ism.

called by the same authority Teutonic Christianity, which has given rise to Protestantism.

If this theory is true, and I cannot see my way out of it, it strikes one as sufficiently absurd, that in certain quarters Gothic architecture has been condemned as opposed to Protestant feeling and principles. In one sense it is so. Protestant is an absurd word to use, and I do so with very great reluctance. In itself it means nothing but a mere negation. It has come in some quarters to bear a meaning with which it has really no more to do than the name of the Wibelungs of Franconia had to do with the Ghibellinism of the Visconti; for it has grown into the badge of a party, to which, for dull, narrow, ignorant, conceited, domineering bigotry, it would be hard to find a parallel, and which, if the Church of Rome be fitly represented by a Lombard cathedral, finds its best representation in one of its own meeting-houses, which are supposed to combine purity of worship with economy in builder's estimates. To Protestantism, in that sense, Gothic architecture is opposed, even more than it is to that of the old Lombards. The latter, if it had nothing else in common with it, had at least beauty and expressiveness; the other has the greatest contempt for anything so "unscriptural" as beauty; and as for expression, the main idea which it cares to express is that of the love of cheapness.

Chronological correspondence.

To go back to what we were speaking of. I said some little time back that the Church of Rome headed the advance of the world for some 400 or 450 years—that is, from the break-up of Charlemagne's empire to the death of Frederick the Second, or the fall of Pope Boniface, take which you will; but I must qualify that statement a little. Though all that time the *Church* was doing its work, growing both in strength and civilisation, the *Papacy*, which was becoming more and more looked upon as its chief representative, was, during its continuance, plunged for a long

time into the deepest and lowest state of degradation that has ever befallen it. It may be thought strange that, while the Papal See was the prize or the puppet of the Theodoras and Marozias, the Counts of Tusculum and the Counts of Palestrina, the rest of Europe should not have "Gothicised" itself into national churches. But the national feeling in those days was in its infancy, and had not reached the stage at which that idea could be developed. On the other hand, the clergy were a strong and powerful order, the sole depositaries of learning and intelligence; and, while fully conscious of the authority which the monopoly of these advantages gave them, not less conscious of the value of union and organisation in enabling them to keep it. So they magnified the position of the Popes to the utmost of their power; and while directing the veneration of their flocks to the person of the distant successor of St Peter—a veneration which was not likely to be shaken by any very accurate knowledge of the realities about him—they took care to claim for themselves some portion of the halo with which he was invested, and thereby secure large store of honour, dominion, and riches. The very weakness of the Popes gave them a great advantage; for this great hierarchy, while asserting their right to rule over the laity, were very resolute in maintaining their own independence, and probably would not have exalted the See of Rome so much if they had thought it at all likely that the nominal supremacy which they attributed to it would be exercised in fact and reality. But they were playing a very dangerous game. Before aggrandising too much the person whom they wished to be the centre of their system, the pivot upon which their organisation turned, the *roi fainéant* or *mikado* who was to receive the homage, the practical advantages of which they hoped to reap, they should have been certain of having him under their control in the same way as the house of Heristal had, and the Japanese Tycoons

have ; and this control, from the very nature of the case, they could not have. They accustomed all Europe to look upon Rome as the seat of an absolute spiritual despotism, unlimited and all-embracing, consecrated by the special decrees of Heaven ; and it only needed that Rome should be in the hands of a man of genius and ambition for her to become actually as well as theoretically their leader and mistress. Such a man appeared about the middle of the eleventh century. During five successive pontificates he was the guiding spirit of the See of Rome : five successive pontiffs, all of them men of high character, and some of them men of high intellect, suffered themselves to act as his creatures and instruments ; at length, exchanging the name of Hildebrand for that of Gregory the Seventh, he assumed the papal sceptre in his own person ; and when, after a stormy career as Pope of twelve years—years of alternate successes and defeats, of mighty triumphs and terrible reverses—he succumbed to death, his work had been well achieved. The power of the hierarchy had been concentrated in the hands of its chief. The dominion of the bishops had passed away ; that of the popes had begun. How that dominion was wielded, what enemies it had to contend against, by what means its successes were obtained, I have endeavoured to sketch briefly in the fifth chapter, and I need not repeat it. Suffice it that for two centuries, from 1050 to 1250, the Papacy was the centre and the life of Christendom : at 1250 it attained its highest point ; after that date a reaction began ; and at 1300 the decline became a fall.

Hildebrand
and Bus-
chetto.

It is curious how exactly this history is reflected in that other world of art with which we are now concerned. We have called Lombard Architecture the expression in that department of the spirit of the Church of Rome, or Latin Christianity. During the time when that spirit was in process of growing, Lombard Architecture, like that spirit,

was crude, rugged, and unformed, though not wanting in power, impressiveness, or even beauty. Both the one and the other required the touch of one man's genius to develop them fully; and both received that touch, and received it at the same time. Buschetto, the Hildebrand of architecture, was Hildebrand's contemporary. In my first chapter I tried to show reasons why he should have appeared *where* he did. I do not know whether I have now shown enough why he should have appeared *when* he did.

Lombard Architecture, then, corresponds, in the period of its rising as well as in its character, to the Church of Rome. It corresponds also in its fall, as we have already seen; and it corresponds in the character of the rival before which it gave way. Italian anti-papalism was not Teutonic Christianity; Italian Gothic was not Teutonic architecture. The character of the "Latin races," as it is now the fashion to call them, was essentially different from those of the North; and the chief representative of those races—in fact, the only really "Latin" race—were the Italians. The attitude which they assumed towards the Church was very different from that assumed by the Germans. The Germans—at least the Germans of the middle ages—were animated by the old spirit of independence of the Teutonic forests, the spirit of Arminius and Wittekind; and their tendency was to resist the attempt to crush individuals under a system. But they owed their civilisation to Christianity, and their tone of thought was in a great measure theological. The Italians, inheriting the traditions of the Roman empire, had not such an objection as their neighbours beyond the Alps had to sacrificing the parts to the whole; but they owed their civilisation in great measure to those traditions, and their tone of thought was mainly secular. This contrast between the two was brought out much more distinctly some three centuries later,

Character
and history
of Italian
Gothic.

at the time of the Reformation, as Macaulay has shown in his essay on Von Ranke's 'History of the Popes;' but it is easy to see it, though not so strongly marked, at the time of which we speak. The German tone was independent and anti-ecclesiastical; the Italian tone was quietly non-ecclesiastical. And this was expressed in their art. Anti-ecclesiastical Gothic could not strike root south of the Alps. It was well for the fierce Ghibellines who flung themselves heart and soul into the cause of Conradin, or the fierce Ghibellines who triumphed in the bloody battle of Monteperto, to stamp their German sympathies and their antagonism to the Pope upon their buildings; but even *they* could not catch the spirit of the North; and the rest of the Tuscans hardly made the attempt. It is this that causes the unsatisfactory appearance of West-Italian Gothic. Fanciful as it may seem to say so, there is a distinct correspondence in architecture to the successive historical facts that a Ghibelline reaction began in Italy after 1250; that though very decided, it did not absorb all other considerations, as the Protestant Reformation did afterwards in Germany; that its violence by degrees wore off; and that though for a long time it tinged the regard with which the Italians looked upon things ecclesiastical, yet it did not take the form of a wish to destroy the Church, and, by degrees losing its importance as contrasted with secular politics, became exchanged for a tolerant and somewhat contemptuous indifference.

Correspondence with political history.

I am sure all this is very confused. I have tossed about the words "Lombard" and "Italian," "secular," "non-ecclesiastical," and "anti-ecclesiastical," till it is perhaps difficult to see which I mean in each case. In truth, a great deal of what I have written has occurred to me as I was writing; and it would not be difficult to point out passages in which a new idea may seem to clash with something that has gone before. I am convinced, however, that there

is truth in what I say. It is seldom that a theory or a parallel can be worked out as neatly as this, I think, has worked itself out, at least in appearance; and I shall be quite prepared to find flaws in it. But I think I am justified in the general assertion, that about the year 1250, Lombard Architecture, the architecture of the Papacy, began to be supplanted by anti-ecclesiastical Gothic; that the latter was modified from the very beginning by the classic or secular influence which had been an element in the Lombard, even as the imperial traditions of Rome had been, and have been, an element in the system of the Papacy; and that this classic influence increased in importance, gradually predominated over the Gothic, and finally superseded it altogether.

I have but one more remark to make on this subject, and that to explain what will probably occur to you as rather a formidable inconsistency. Venice, as I said, leapt suddenly out of Byzantine into Gothic in 1300: her doing so coincided in time with a very pronounced tendency on her part to concern herself with Italian affairs; and I connected the two facts together. Now, Venice was much more Gothic than Florence, or even Pisa; and it may seem inconsistent to suppose that she could have drawn from Italian influence so very decided a Gothic just at the moment at which, in Italy, Gothic was beginning to show signs of giving way to classicalism. But the fact was, that the part of the mainland nearest to Venice was much more German than any other part of Italy. Feudalism, and the chivalry which belongs to feudalism, struck a much deeper root there than elsewhere, principally owing to the nature of the country; in part also, perhaps, to the traditions of the old Marquises of Friuli. The spacious plains of Venetia gave abundance of room for the operations of cavalry; their fertility facilitated the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the lords of the soil. These advantages were pos-

Apparent exception at Venice.

sessed in an equal or even higher degree by the nobles of Central Lombardy; but there were not to be found on the west of the Mincio those numerous hills of moderate elevation which gave to their eastern neighbours so many natural sites for fortresses; and consequently, while the former found themselves drawn to take up their residence in the cities, the latter strengthened themselves in their castles on the hills, and retained an independence which they were not long in extending into something more. In one region of Central Lombardy—the skirts of the Alps—the same facilities for erecting fortresses were to be found; and it was from hence that the two great houses who successively ruled over Milan, those of La Torre and Visconti, took their rise; but it was only in Venetia that the hills were generally of gentle enough slope to admit of cultivation, and, consequently, where the advantages of dwelling in the plain and the advantage of dwelling on the hills could be combined over any very wide extent of country. The feudalism which the nature of the country thus preserved among the nobility of that province more than among those of any other part of Northern Italy, naturally stamped upon them a character more like that of the feudal Germans than was to be found elsewhere; and this was greatly enhanced by the comparative ease with which, in that quarter, communications were kept up between the north and south of the Alps. The idea of the dangers of those mountains is principally connected with their Swiss and Piedmontese portions. It is in the Western Alps that the hospice of St Bernard was founded long ago, to succour travellers lost in those terrible solitudes, and countless lives have been preserved by the devoted energy of its inmates. It is to the Western Alps that belong all the adventurous “crossings of the Alps” that we hear of—the perilous march of Hannibal, the terrible mid-winter expedition of the Emperor Henry the Fourth and his empress, the more recent passages of Suwarrow and Macdonald.

In the Eastern Alps nature wears a somewhat gentler aspect. The passes may be traversed with less fatigue, and are less frequently stopped by the snow; and it is therefore less to be wondered at if the Lombard of the Veronese or Trevisan Marches was brought more frequently into contact with the Germans of Bavaria and Carinthia than his western countrymen could be with those from whom he was separated by the tremendous barrier over which the science of modern engineers has with difficulty constructed the roads of the Splugen, the St Gotthard, and the Simplon. There was consequently much more interchange, both of merchandise and of ideas, between North and South here than anywhere else; and German art, following easily in the track of commerce, found not only a smoother access to the Italian soil, but also found itself among a people better prepared, by their habits and the tone of their minds, to receive it, than it could do elsewhere.

We may at last, I think, put our train in motion. There Art of mosaic. has been a very long halt at the station called A.D. 1300, and I feel rather as one does when, after being kept waiting long past the time mentioned in the railway timetables, one at last hears the bell ring. But a minute or so sometimes elapses between the sound of the bell and the actual starting of the train; and I take advantage of that minute or so to point out that there is another art, the history of which corresponds even more closely to that of the Papacy than Lombard Architecture does. I mean the art of Mosaic. After the Byzantine school, from becoming worse and worse, weaker and weaker, year by year and century by century, had at last died out, and become buried in oblivion during the period when the Papacy was plunged in the depths of its Marozian and Tusculan darkness, the art began faintly to revive under the animating influence of the new life which was stirring in the Church, no longer

in the torpid rigidity of Byzantium, but in the unformed but not ungraceful style of the Romanesque. Its first appearance was at Rome, in the churches which I mention in Chap. I., those of S. Clemente and Sta Maria in Trastevere; and it must be allowed that in those churches (I am thinking especially of the former) it did not make a bad start. It lasted to the end of the period of the Papal glory; and it culminated in Torrita about the same time that the Papacy culminated in Innocent the Fourth. For the next fifty years it went on, never quite equalling Torrita, but still holding its head very high before the world; but its younger rival, Painting, fast gained ground. During the second half of the thirteenth century, two illustrious Florentines, Andrea Tafi and Gaddo Gaddi, won high honour both for themselves and their art: even Cimabue sometimes indulged in it; and it was by him that the magnificent Mosaic in the apse of the Pisan Cathedral was designed—a work for which, in its almost awful grandeur, it would be hard to find a parallel. I doubt whether, in spite of the strides which Painting was making, Mosaic would not have retained the superiority, unless some change had come over the whole spirit of the art; for the expression of divine and unearthly majesty, the character of eternal durability which the mosaics bore, was better fitted than the more rapid and more evanescent work of the painter. But a change was at hand: the new spirit which Nicola had breathed into Sculpture was about to touch Painting also; and the date 1300, which sounded the knell of the Hildebrandian Papacy, sounded also the knell of that Art of Mosaic which had arisen along with it. Art was no longer to embody, with however much beauty, the idea of immovable majesty, whether in building or in colour. The play of the human intellect, the endless diversity of human character, required to be expressed in a fashion which it was out of the power of Lombard Architecture, or

of Mosaic painting, to express. Mosaic held its ground for a while at the beginning of the Trecento. At that period, the last, and by no means the least distinguished, of the mosaicists, Pietro Cavallini, the Boniface of the art, was working in Rome. But Giotto came; and before the representative of Nicola Pisano, the school of Cavallini, and the art which it practised, crumbled in the dust; and finally, Cavallini himself, not like Boniface here, saw that his art was gone, and, determining to fall in with the fashion of his time, set himself contentedly to work as a scholar in the *bottega* of his younger rival.*

We may now start fair. There are many stations along the line of the fourteenth century. Fortunately the very nature of this sketch is such as to make it undesirable to stop at many of them, even if I were inclined to do so.

Architecture went on in the course which, from what we have seen of it, we might have expected it to follow. The disappearance of the Church from the field of Italian politics not only cooled the zeal of her friends, but slackened the wrath of her enemies; and both parties alike subsided into a tolerant and not unkindly indifference towards her. The buildings of the Italians exhibit the growth of this tendency. Even in the Cathedral of Florence the classical element rather predominates; and this, while it

ART FROM
1300 TO
1400.

Architec-
ture.

Growth of
classicism.

* The reason why I say that the history of Mosaic is *more* like that of the Hildebrandian Papacy than that of Lombard Architecture, is, that while the leading character of 1250 in the former art is the man who carried it to perfection, and after whose time a decline set in, in the latter art it is the man who gave it its death-blow. Torrita, in a sort of way, answers to Innocent the Fourth. Nicola rather answers to Frederick the Second. The general effect of the parallel remains, because, though Frederick was defeated, and Nicola was not, the principle for which he contended was, like Nicola's art, successful in the end: but to make the correspondence exact, Nicola should have been a great Lombard architect, who carried the characteristics of that school to a pitch of exaggeration: a reactionary Gothic movement should have commenced after his time: but no very great man should have at first appeared to work it, and it should have been rather a national growth than the work of an individual.

perhaps ought to make one question the correctness of selecting that building as the type of Western Italian Gothic, is enough to account for its comparative freedom from incongruities.* As we advance in the century, secular classicalism gained more and more upon anti-papal Gothic; and under its wing, even something approaching to the old style of Hildebrand and Buschetto began to reappear. Classicalised Lombard was, in fact, the most fitting architecture for a nation which, though not irreligious, was not theologically inclined, and which, though not caring much what ecclesiastical forms its spiritual leaders might adopt, naturally preferred a Church which was moulded after the traditions in which it had itself been nurtured. There was assuredly little chance that Gothic would take root among a people of this character.

Tuscany.

I do not know of many great architectural works of the fourteenth century in Western Italy. The most celebrated and the most beautiful, without a doubt, is Giotto's Campanile. I have, however, spoken of that before, rather

* Since writing the above, I have been glad to discover that Mr Fer-gusson, in his 'Handbook for Architecture,' supports the opinion that this cathedral is "the greatest and most perfect specimen of Italian Gothic." His theory is, that the dome was to have had the appearance, externally, of a hexagon, or, more probably, an octagon, with a series of storeys, adorned with rich architectural decorations, rising one above the other, and receding inwards, and at last culminating in a lofty octagonal tower, surmounted by a spire. Even the genius of Brunelleschi cannot prevent one's regretting that such a design was not carried out. The building would then have been distinctly Gothic, and probably the finest Gothic building in the world. Unfortunately this is not the only instance in which this fine cathedral has suffered from the original design not having been carried out; nor is it the worst. If Brunelleschi did harm by abandoning Arnolfo's plan (if, indeed, it *was* his plan), he at any rate gave something in place of it, which in its own way is very admirable. But it is sickening to see the façade. The magnificent work which Arnolfo designed, and on which Giotto laboured, was torn down, when half finished, to make way for a Renaissance affair, which, after all, was not built; and the front of the cathedral remains a blank sheet of plaster, decorated with Ionic columns in white paint.

as an echo of the Cathedral than as a perfectly independent work; and though the sound produced by Arnolfo is reverberated in a deeper tone perhaps, and with more sweetness, than had followed the original stroke, it must, I think, still be considered an echo. The Campo Santo of Pisa is another work of this century. It is undoubtedly a beautiful building; but it owes much, indeed most, of its interest to its felicitous juxtaposition with the three marvellous edifices to which it forms the background, and to the yet more fortunate circumstance of its walls having been covered, in this and the following century, with paintings which have rendered it a storehouse of mediæval art. Perhaps more beauty and picturesqueness, though of course not nearly the same interest, is to be found in the little chapel of Santa Maria della Spina, in the same city. But the architectural work of Western Italy which comes nearest to Giotto's Campanile, and, in fact, is as clearly the great triumph of the latter as the other is of the former half of the century, is the Loggia, now called the Loggia de' Lanzi, which was erected in the Public Place of Florence by the genius of Orcagna. Had the architect's design been carried out, it would, in its completeness, have encircled the whole Piazza; and while one regrets that it was never allowed to do so, I think one cannot help feeling that it possesses, in its present condition, a peculiar beauty which, in the more perfect work, would have been lost. In it, as in the Campo Santo, the Gothic influence is wearing very thin; and it may be not unnatural to mention, in connection with this, that Orcagna, though in some ways a follower of Giotto, and profiting by the improvements which that great man had introduced into the mechanical portion of his art, was in heart rather drawn to that elder school which, at Florence, had perished with Cimabue, but the spirit of which still survived at Siena.

I think I have said all that I need about Tuscan archi-

Æmilia.

ecture. Æmilia did not do much in that way during the period 1300-1400. At the very end of the century, Bologna set to work to build herself a cathedral which was to astonish the world. It was to be nearly as large, at least in point of area, as St Peter's at Rome is now. But the design was too ambitious; and it never reached more than one-third of that size. Nor need this be regretted:—it is too large already. Bologna fell into the essentially vulgar mistake of thinking that bigness means greatness, and her would-be giant cathedral is little better than a huge, dull, lanky barn, deriving its principal interest from some bas-reliefs by Sienese and Æmilian sculptors of the Quattro-cento, which have been stuck more or less awkwardly along its façade. Poor Bologna! If she was to build herself a cathedral, she should have done it sooner. If she had erected one in the days of Fossalta, when King Hensius was her captive, and the great Emperor prostrating himself, as it were, and prostrating himself in vain, before her footstool, in entreaties to be allowed to purchase, at almost *any* price, the privilege of seeing again the most beloved of his children—if she had erected it then, and given the charge of doing so to Nicola Pisano, the sculptor of her “Arca di S. Domenico,” it would have been a grand, though probably not a faultless, monument of her greatness. But she let that occasion pass; and she undertook the work at a time when her republican vitality was fast disappearing, or only showing by fits and starts, and when she was beginning to accustom herself to the idea that freedom only means a change of masters. At the moment of the commencement of the Cathedral of S. Petronio, I believe she calls herself a republic. But the days of tyranny are not far distant. The Bentivogli, the descendants of the imprisoned Hensius, are at the doors to avenge the wrongs of their illustrious ancestor by the enslavement of the city of his captivity; and behind the Bentivogli may be seen a yet more terrible figure—that of Gian Galeazzo Visconti.

Northern Lombardy, or that part of it which more generally goes by the name, was not deficient in architecture during the fourteenth century. Several of its halls and churches date from this period ; and at the very conclusion of it, about contemporary with the unhappy attempt at Bologna which I have just spoken of, the land of tyranny, if I may so call Lombardy, made vigorous and not unsuccessful attempts at architectural distinction, in two great and justly celebrated buildings—the Cathedral of Milan and the Certosa of Pavia. Any criticism which I could give on either of these edifices would not be worth much under any circumstances ; and in this case I am saved from all inducement to make the attempt by the fact that I have not seen the former since I was a boy, and have never seen the latter at all. The former owes its erection to that tyrant of the tyrants, that incarnation of Viscontinism, Gian Galeazzo, and its form to an Austrian architect, Heinrich of Gmänden, whose somewhat crack-jaw name was transformed by the Italians into the mellifluous sound of Enrico da Gamodia. The latter has the reputation of trying to compensate for poverty of design by richness of detail : the decoration is said to be beautiful, the structure somewhat mean—a combination which is a pretty sure sign of decay.

I have not dwelt on the foreign origin of the Duomo, or the bad architecture of the Certosa, in order to save a theory which represents Art as the child of freedom, and therefore extinct in Lombardy. The theory in question only holds good in its full extent with regard to sculpture and painting, and applies with much less force to architecture. The reason is plain. No amount of princely patronage, no amount of gold, or high office, or royal smiles, will give genius to the artist any more than to the poet ; and without genius he may spoil Carrara marble, and multiply academy figures on canvass for ever, without doing much good. But an architect can derive more assistance from material aids than a painter or a sculptor can. A great building

Architecture may flourish without freedom.

strikes and impresses by its very size, irrespective of all other considerations : beauty of material very often goes a long way to make up for, or at least divert attention from, the grossest faults of construction ; and though, of course, it is possible for a man of genius to dispense with, and arise far above, all these adventitious aids, and though it is possible for a bungler so to use them as to throw them away altogether, yet it is undeniable that, with their assistance, a painstaking man, with an average amount of talent and good taste, may make a much more creditable show in architecture than in either of the other departments of art. So that a potentate who has a great command of money can, unless he is very unlucky, make pretty sure of attaining a very fair reputation by his buildings. Few monuments of the past are so impressive as those bequeathed to us by those two great empires whose dark shadows lie across the earliest beginnings of history — empires which not only bowed down both the souls and bodies of men under a most crushing despotism, but are also represented, both in the Sacred Record, and in the legends of the East, as having exalted themselves in the madness of their pride, and dared to confront the Majesty of Heaven. And a yet more forcible, because more familiar, example, is the Empire of Rome. I suppose there never was so complete, so utter, so willing a loss, abnegation of anything approaching to freedom, as that which prevailed among the subjects of the divine Cæsars ; and yet I suppose that there never was a time at which the world, or at least that part of it over which they ruled, was so covered with great and stately buildings. The Cæsars, at least many of them, delighted in architecture—they had the revenues of the world at their command : they inherited from the old Romans a love for massiveness and solidity : from the greatness of their own position, and the almost boundless extent of their empire, they conceived and wished to express the idea of

vastness ; and their designs were guided by the exquisite taste which, even amid their lowest degradation, never in ancient times deserted the Greeks. A Parthenon or a Campanile of Florence their architects could probably not have designed ; but they produced a Colosseum, a Pantheon, a Temple of Jupiter Olympius, a Danubian Viaduct, a Temple of Baalbec, a Palace of Spalatro, besides countless buildings as great or greater which have perished. Architecture may fare pretty well in the hands of enlightened despots.

But I do not know whether this excuse will serve me altogether. The theory which I started with has worked itself out in so many ways of which, when I began, I had never so much as dreamed, that I am beginning to suspect there must be something wrong about it ; for, practically, things do not often come out with such perfect neatness ; and I think it is rather in my favour if I can find a flaw somewhere. I *can* find a flaw ; and it is rather an important one, for it is one that will not be covered by the general excuse that architecture may, under some circumstances, flourish independently of freedom. Of all the important cities in Lombardy, *the* one of all others in which you would expect to see no approach to art, architectural or other, is Verona. That city had been one of the earliest to fall under a tyranny : the tyranny which she fell under was worse and more cruel, not only than anything that had been known before, but (except perhaps Walter de Brienne's) than anything that had been known since ; and when she had been delivered from it, not by her own exertions, but by those of the tyrant's foreign enemies, she immediately cast herself at the feet of another. That new tyranny was the first in Italy to make the attempt to grow into an empire powerful enough to threaten the independence of the whole peninsula. It was also the first to decline, and fall first from the hands of conquerors into those of intriguers, and then from the hands of intriguers into those of debauchees, assassins, and

Instance of
Verona.

fratricides. In speaking of the war which the League of Venetia waged against the Visconti, I have occasion to notice the degeneracy which had at that time befallen each and all of the four families of whom that League was composed. In the Scalas alone was that degeneracy complete and irretrievable. Such degeneracy is a stain on the people as well as their princes; for the people of Verona were as well content with the rule of these wretched *fainéants* as they had been with that of their heroic ancestors: and not less were they content, when, the measure of folly and iniquity having been filled, the last descendants of the Scalas were swept from the throne which they could only disgrace; and the city which had for so long approved, or at least tolerated, their misdeeds, losing not only its liberty, but even its independent existence, was swallowed up in the expanding dominion of Venice. And yet this unhappy city, perhaps the most melancholy spectacle to be found in the Italy of that day, as an example of what an ancient and illustrious Republic could descend to, is distinguished as the possessor of the noblest and purest monuments of Gothic architecture, and even sculpture, in the whole of Italy. With regard to sculpture, indeed, the force of the objection is weakened, though not destroyed, by the fact that it was in the first instance imported from Pisa; but with regard to architecture, I do not see what account is to be given of it. I take my view of it second-hand from Ruskin; for you will remember that it was in this town of Verona that our lionising was brought to a sudden and abrupt termination, and that we did not get a chance of seeing what there was to be seen there; and taking that writer's authority, and following it blindly, except so far as I may be enlightened by the occasional drawings which he gives in his books, I am driven to admit that Verona, being such as she was, possessed nevertheless an admirable school of Gothic architecture—admirable for its intrinsic excellence, and owing nothing to

sculptural decoration, coloured marble, or imposing size. If I have followed Ruskin's lead too uninquiringly, and have thereby fallen into a mistake, so much the better for my general theory; but in the meanwhile I am content to believe it, and to acquiesce in the fact of a flaw.

There is little that need be said about Venice. Here, Venice. as in Tuscany, the date 1300 gives the tone to the whole century; and, during all that time, Gothic architecture, gloriously triumphant in the Ducal Palace, is engaged in hunting out the Byzantine from the holes and corners in which it still lurks. In the Palace of the Trecento (for it is in secular rather than ecclesiastical buildings that, as I have before observed, the highest excellence of Venetian architecture is to be sought), we find Gothic little by little winning its way. Its great impregnable fortress, erected by order of Gradenigo at the beginning of the century, affords it an unfailing base of operations; while, from the political causes mentioned last time I had occasion to speak of Venice, its rival was cut off from the sources of its strength. So Gothic architecture triumphed, and her triumph was not marred by the awkward classicalism of the West. In the pride of her victorious energy she had won her way, as she thought, to perfection; and, rejoicing in her strength and beauty, sought for no further advance in the old spirit, and began to indulge in the lusciousness of over-ornamentation, covering herself with the pomp of finery—no longer the mere luxuriance which might seem to grow out of her very nature, but the gaudiness of self-conscious adornment. The day of her humiliation was at hand; but it did not come till after the period of autumn had set in. During the fifteenth century, the classical revival, which had easily mastered the sickly Gothic of the West, advanced to the overthrow of her proud sister of the Adriatic. As in the West the enemy veiled his approaches under the cover of the Lombard style, so in the East he veiled it under the

cover of the Byzantine. But instead of striving, as he did in Tuscany, gently and imperceptibly to supplant his rival, he came forward in the guise of declared hostility, the Renaissance banners broadly displayed in the light of day, behind the Byzantine vanguard. The victory was complete. Gothic had laid her arms aside in order to dress herself in velvet and brocade, and she fell before the blows of the invader, and was trampled under foot. Venetian Gothic may, however, claim this to be set to her credit—that she was strong enough to put her antagonist on his mettle. In Tuscany, having no enemy worthy of his steel, the Genius of the Renaissance was content to repose, after his one great effort, under the dome of Brunelleschi. At Venice he displayed his power in a long series of splendid palaces, and even endeavoured, not without some success, to confront the Gothic Queen on her own chosen battle-field of the Ducal Palace. But this is anticipating.

Sculpture.
1200-1300.

School of
Pisa.

We may now make our bow, I think, to Trecentista Architecture. Sculpture has a more satisfactory aspect during this century, but her story is much simpler, and may be told in few words. In Western Italy, though she never reached the point at which Nicola had originally placed her, she perhaps did better; for what she lost in classical perfection she gained in nationality. The Pisan school, though the trunk became withered and barren in the impoverished soil where it sprang, was enabled before its decay to give out shoots, which, cut from the stem, and planted elsewhere, bore rich fruit and foliage. The cutting which Giovanni Pisano had set in the ground at Siena, took its form from the place where it grew, though not without retaining traces of its origin. That which his pupil Andrea carried to Florence was grafted upon an already rising tree, and soon lost its individuality. Giovanni di Balduccio carried another to Verona, where the unaccountable vitality of that land of political death exhibited itself in the celebrated tombs of

the Scalas; and I think it must have been from Verona that that branch was originally taken which grew into such a splendid mass of foliage at Venice. Even at Pisa herself, the spasmodic energy which occasionally displayed itself in her external relations was reflected in her school of art; and towards the middle of the century, no long time after her conquest of Lucca (the Leaningtower and Lady Lucre transaction), Nino Pisano, son of Andrea, was working as a sculptor within her walls; and though he was no more equal to Andrea than Giovanni had been equal to *his* father, the great Nicola, yet he was not without merit; and he rather reminds me of what one sees sometimes—a single living bough on a dead tree.

The history of Western sculpture during this century is rather like that of architecture; and, as we shall see in the case of painting, the spirit which, for want of a better name, I characterised as Protestant, gradually gives way to the ecclesiastical tendency. That this is not a change in a religious, but rather in a secular direction, I have tried to show already. At the same time, I do not imagine that the artists themselves were aware of the goal to which they were tending. Orcagna, the great reviver of Lombard architecture and Byzantine sculpture and painting, is bracketed by Lord Lindsay with Fra Angelico as a pre-eminently religious artist; but none the less was he the forerunner of the Renaissance. In art, at least, whatever may be the case with other things, Catholicism has been the portal of Paganism.

The chief works in sculpture in Western Italy during this period, are the fountain of Perugia, the shrine of St Donato at Arezzo, the façade of the Cathedral of Orvieto, and the tomb of Pope Benedict, which is mentioned in Chap. V., all by Giovanni Pisano; the bas-reliefs of the Florentine Campanile, by Giotto; the bronze doors of the southern side of the Baptistery hard by, by Andrea Pisano; the tomb of Guido Tarlati, at Arezzo, by Agostino and Agnolo of Siena;

Growth of
classicism.

Tuscany.

and, above all, the magnificent shrine of the Madonna of Or' San Michele, at Florence, by Orcagna. These are by no means all the extant works of the Trecento, but they are, I fancy, the best ; and certainly by them the sculpture of that period may be perfectly content to stand or fall. As one writes down the names of those who executed them, one cannot avoid being struck with the largeness and variety of genius among the men of that day. Not one of those I have named but was distinguished in more than one department of art ; and, indeed, during the whole period 1250-1400, it was rather the rule than the exception for artists to be so. The three greatest men of the three half-centuries, Nicola, Giotto, and Orcagna, practised in all the three arts, Giotto being a mosaicist to boot. Margaritone was painter and sculptor ; Cimabue painter and mosaicist ; Giovanni and Andrea of Pisa, Agostino and Agnolo of Siena, Arnolfo of Florence, were architects and sculptors : Taddeo Gaddi was painter and architect. The unity of art began to be lost sight of in the Quattrocento. At its commencement, indeed, Brunelleschi and Ghiberti endeavoured to keep up the tradition of the connection of sculpture and architecture ; but Brunelleschi, after a while, devoted himself entirely to the latter ; and Ghiberti, though his great baptistery doors stand alone in unapproachable grace and loveliness as a miracle of sculpture, was but a poor architect ; and after their time artists generally preferred confining themselves to one branch. Of all the brilliant crowd of Quattrocento painters and sculptors, only Verocchio and the Pollajuoli (no mean exceptions, it is true) strove to combine the two arts ; and it was not till the opening of the sixteenth century that the catholicity of art was again appreciated and developed by the three greatest men who have devoted themselves to it in that or any other age—Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo Buonarrotti, and Raffaello Sanzio of Urbino.

Of the sculpture of other parts of Italy I can say little. *Æmilia*. I recollect, as perhaps you also may, seeing a bas-relief at Bologna of this century, over the tomb of Taddeo Pepoli, in which he is represented sitting in his chair of office, administering justice to the citizens ; but I have only an indistinct picture of it before my mind, and I forget, even if I ever knew, the name of the artist ; and as this is all that I remember of *Æmilian* Trecento sculpture, I have not much to say about it.* Nor have I much to say of Lombardy. The *Lombardy*. only specimens of sculpture of that region during this century that I know of, are the tombs of the Scalas ; and the only thing which is to my present purpose to say about them is (I rely on Ruskin, as before), that in proportion to the degeneracy of the race is the splendour of their monuments. Of all the things which we missed seeing in Verona, I am not sure that I do not regret the tomb and statue of Can Grande the most. His portrait would have been worth examining. I had not occasion to put him very prominently forward in the sixth chapter, because he was not brought into direct collision with Florence, and therefore plays no great part in the main contest between freedom and tyranny. But he was certainly the greatest, and by no means the worst, man whom Italy produced during the course of the half-century with which that chapter is concerned.

But of all the works of sculpture of the Trecento, the *Venice*. most interesting, perhaps, are the monuments of Venice. I speak with great diffidence here ; for, in comparing the art of Venice with that of Tuscany, I am sensible that, as I said some pages back, there is a difference between them, a difference which arises from causes underlying the whole of the national character of the two, and which it

* Since this was written, I have found out that the Pepoli monument is not an *Æmilian* work at all. The sculptor was by birth a Lombard of Vicenza, and by education a Sienese.

would be unjust and presumptuous to call superiority on the part of either over the other : and if I write rather as if the Venetian art had the greatest attraction for me, it is not a feeling which I expect everybody to share, or indeed a feeling which I always have myself. I daresay you will see what I mean. Of the sculptures of Venice, those which I am principally thinking of are, first, those on the capitals of the pillars from which spring the arches of the sea front of the Ducal Palace, sculptures over which Ruskin has thrown so much interest by his descriptions of them, with illustrations from the Arena of Padua and the 'Faerie Queen;' and you will recollect how we worked our way through them, carrying the 'Stones of Venice' with us one very hot day till we were nearly ready to drop. And, secondly, the monuments of the great men of Venice. Of these, the three finest are those of the doges Andrea Dandolo, Marco Cornaro, and Michele Morosini, the former, as I have had occasion to mention, in St Mark's, the other two in the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. There is a wonderful beauty and nobleness in the figures and heads, especially those of Dandolo and Morosini ; and I think one requires nothing but a visit to SS. Giovanni e Paolo to induce one to reject as a calumny the story which Daru tells, and the writer of 'Sketches of Venetian History' reproduces, that Morosini was a mean grasping knave, who made money out of the universal misery of his countrymen during the war of Chiozza, and gave vent to the noble sentiment, "What matters it if Venice fall, so that I perish not with her?" Ruskin has taken some trouble to refute this slander, and I think successfully : but I quite agree with him in thinking that the best refutation is expressed in the monument of the doge himself ; the old magnifico seems to speak from the tomb to silence the voices of his calumniators. I know no monuments anywhere to match these of the Venetians. That they are what they are, is of course principally owing

to the subjects of them : but the art of the sculptors must go for a good deal too. How important a share that art has, may be shown by comparing the monuments I have mentioned with another in the Church (I think) of the Frari. That church contains the ashes of one of the greatest of the whole series of Venetian doges—Leonardo Loredano, who piloted the vessel of the republic through that tremendous storm which befell at the opening of the sixteenth century, when she was attacked by the combined forces of continental Europe, banded together against her in the League of Cambray. It is difficult to believe that this great prince is represented by the figure which sits grimacing at the top of the Renaissance tomb which goes by his name—a figure leaning forward in its chair, with a smirk on its face, and with its hands spread out with a sort of air of “Pray, don’t trouble yourself.” Even with his best efforts the sculptor could not succeed in making Doge Loredano look vulgar ; and one is quite prepared to think that a really fine portrait might be made of him. Such a portrait there is, and by Gian Bellini. It is, I am glad to say, in the National Gallery, and whenever I get a chance of going there, I am not very long in making my way to it. I cannot help wondering that nothing has been said about the Frari monument and the Bellini picture of Leonardo Loredano in the ‘Stones of Venice.’

Trecento Painting might be dilated upon at almost any length ; and in order to avoid doing so, I must keep constantly repeating to myself what I think you will say I have been forgetting, that I am not attempting a treatise on art, but only a general comparison of it with political history. I have had so little to say about Sculpture, that there has been a temptation to be discursive. I have now, on more grounds than one, a still stronger inducement to compress.

What the Florentine Republic, during the Trecento, was to Italy, that was the Florentine school to Italian art. As

Painting.
1300-1400.

Influence of
Florence.

Florence was the queen of the Ausonian communes, the heart of the Guelf league, the inspiring genius of liberty, so was her school of painting the foremost and best in the whole peninsula—the fountain from whence the art of the rest of Italy drew its life. With few exceptions, wherever a city had a free constitution, there might be traced the influence of Florentine diplomacy ; and again, with few exceptions, wherever a city had a school of painters, there might be traced the influence of Florentine art. All through the half-century 1300-1350, we have seen Florence forward and energetic in the cause of freedom—forming alliances, getting up leagues, encouraging her neighbours to uphold the right—in one instance foregoing her own claims to empire, in order that her own subjects might be free ; and during that same period her great master, Giotto, was travelling all over the land, an unconscious missionary, planting everywhere shoots of the tree of art. He went to Rome, where, from a fatality for which, in the third chapter, I have endeavoured to assign a cause, his work produced no effect, and hardly any traces of it remain. He went to Lombardy, where alone of all his numerous works remains that which alone left any artistic progeny, the Arena Chapel in the republican city of Padua. He went to Umbria, and painted the Lower Church of Assisi, as the Upper one has been painted by Giunta and Cimabue ; and his work there, which is one of the most perfect which he ever executed, was continued after his departure by his pupils. He went to Naples, where, under the liberal patronage of King Robert, he painted much in fresco : only those frescoes in the Church of the Incoronata now remain to be seen, though I believe others exist uninjured, though hidden by the friendly barbarism of the eighteenth century under coats of whitewash, by which they are concealed but preserved. And, finally, after having scattered in many regions the seeds of those principles of art of which he was the

Giotto.

apostle, he returned to the city from which he had drawn his earliest inspiration, and which had witnessed his earliest attempts in art, to consecrate the last efforts of his genius to her benefit and her glory.

The fate of the schools which Giotto founded was various, and reflects, with curious exactness, the character of the localities where they were placed. As I said above, his Roman school came to nothing. His chief pupil, Cavallini, ^{The Giot-teschi.} 1. Rome. was a much older man than himself; and whether it was that he was not young enough to be able to throw himself with effect into a new line, or whether, as I rather prefer to believe, because the Roman atmosphere was unfavourable to art, no result followed from his conversion to his rival's principles. There was more appearance of a succession at 2. Naples. Naples. The kingdom of Naples was what the Italians called a "natural signory;" that is, it had always been a monarchy, and therefore its being so was not the result of lawlessness, or a sign of the corruption which enabled lawlessness to prevail, so that it was not, as the Lombard tyrannies were, an enemy, by the law of its nature, of the principles in which art had its roots. But though the Neapolitan monarchy had not upon art the effect of choke-damp, as the tyrannies generally had, it was not such an atmosphere as was calculated to produce a hardy growth; and besides, the soil was not very rich or prolific. So that art dragged on a languid existence, leaning perhaps more to the side of sculpture than to that of painting, till it received a blow which killed, or at least stunned it, amid the horrible anarchy which raged around the throne of Queen Joanna.

More fortunate was the school which Giotto founded in 3. Umbria. Umbria. In that country, viewed in its social and political aspect, there were three distinct elements of influence. The first was the mystical religion, which was perhaps a natural growth of the lonely Umbrian mountains, from

whence the eye might wander over those dreamy sunset landscapes so familiar to us from the pictures of Perugino,—a religion which, after peopling the solitude with hermitages, found its highest expression in the character of St Francis, and gathered itself, as to a centre, round the renowned shrine of Assisi, which contains his body. The second was the feudal spirit of chivalry, represented chiefly by the family of Montefeltro, and developing itself afterwards into the famous court of Urbino, which, like the palace where it resided, bore about it an essentially feudal character amidst all its classicalism. And the third was the freedom of civic republics, of which the principal embodiment was the city of Perugia, which, as we have seen, begins about the end of the half-century to come into prominent relief. It was through the third of these portals that the influence of Florence might be supposed to enter. We have had occasion to see the close connection which has existed between the two republics. The first time that we have had to mention Perugia, it has been as an ally of Florence ; and we have noticed the cordiality and friendship which the latter, like an elder sister, has shown towards her Umbrian relative—encouraging her to do right, assisting her in her difficulties, mediating for her in her quarrels—kindly offices which, I am sorry to say, Perugia does not reciprocate as she should. And yet she renders to her ally one very great service,—she preserves her freedom during very critical periods of Florence's history ; and the mere fact of her existence as a republic, though not a very glorious one, is of great importance in preserving the balance between the two great principles. But, as I say, the Perugians were not a very noble people. Collectively they were fickle, unsteady, ungrateful, almost pusillanimous ; individually they were distinguished among the races of Italy for rudeness and ferocity. It was not among such as these that the gentle influences of painting could be

expected to produce much effect. But they did produce some. Reminiscences of Giotto's art lingered long among the Umbrian hills, and at length were reproduced by one of the greatest masters whom Italy has known, Gentile da Fabriano. Gentile was not, however, a pure Giottesco. His paintings are, perhaps, even more animated by the feudal influence which I have mentioned as one of the elements which went to form the Umbrian character ; and the richness and gorgeousness of colouring in which he delighted were not characteristics of the Florentine school, and seem almost to imply a connection with Venice.* After the time of Gentile, Umbrian art was turned into a new channel. Perugia, after the end of the Trecento, began to lean towards tyranny. Like Bologna, she did not at once abandon the party of freedom : she remained for some time fitfully swaying from one side to the other : she gave way to the epidemic of slavery, which drove so large a part of Italy to accept the yoke of Gian Galeazzo : after that tyrant's death, she fell under the more honourable and warlike rule of the accomplished soldier Braccio da Montone ; and finally, as the fifteenth century wore on, she became the capital of the house of Baglioni, from whose dominion she was afterwards transferred by a most flagrant treason on the part of Leo the Tenth to that of the Popes. So that the element of liberty passed away ; and that of feudalism, which was strong enough to influence the painters, was not strong enough to inspire them alone. But the Florentine masters had done their work in introducing their art ; and when the spirit which had guided them perished out of the land, the pencil and palette, which they and their successors could no longer hold, were taken up by another school, which has associated its name for ever with that of Umbria

* That he was a good deal at Venice during his later years is well known ; but it seems to be by no means certain that he did not derive his colouring from some independent source.

—that school which gave expression to the remaining element of the life of Central Italy—the school of Alunno and Bonfigli, Perugino and Spagna, Pinturicchio and Raphael.

4. Padua.

Great, however, as was the work which Florence helped to produce in Umbria, she can only be credited with the commencement of it; for it was no Florentine influence that presided over the perfecting of that school. She was more directly concerned with the development of art at Padua. Padua, you may remember, was a free city during the first quarter of the fourteenth century, and it was during that time that Giotto visited her. The seeds which the great Florentine master sowed lay dormant for nearly half a century, during which time her sovereignty was bandied about from the Carraras to the Scalas, and from the Scalas back to the Carraras, in an alternative of servitude, which perhaps was less disgraceful than the dull torpor of Verona, but which was ignominious enough. But towards the end of the third quarter of the century a change came over her fortunes. She did not recover her freedom, but her subjection ceased to be discreditable. The house of Carrara, though at first it had not given much promise of being anything but a race of commonplace tyrants, suddenly developed talents which that order of men did not at that period often exhibit, and which, in the next generation, reversing the usual order of things, were supplemented by moral excellences. Francesco da Carrara, as I mentioned in speaking of the war of Pavia, began his reign under no very favourable auspices, for he acquired his power by conspiring against his uncle Jacopino, whom he dethroned and imprisoned for life; but he illustrated the sovereignty which he had so lawlessly attained by the highest ability, both as a statesman and as a general; and had I written the story of the War of Chiozza, I should have had occasion to bring this out. His son of the same name—called, for the sake of

distinction, Francesco Novello—possessed his father's merits without his faults. There is hardly any more interesting story than his in the annals of any nation. His marvellous daring, his constancy in peril, his chivalrous virtues, his intellectual accomplishments, his romantic adventures, his undeserved misfortunes, his miserable end, can be matched in Italian history (perhaps I might say in *any* history) by those of Manfred alone ; and though the part which the latter played was more important, and the struggle with which he was concerned was more momentous, I doubt whether, apart from all external considerations, the fortunes of Carrara are not the more interesting of the two. The sons of this distinguished prince gave every promise of inheriting the character of their father ; but their fate was like that of Conradin ; and before that promise had had time to ripen, they were sacrificed to the merciless jealousy of enemies who knew that they had injured them too deeply to be ever forgiven. Under such rulers as these, servitude wore no ignoble guise ; and the obedience of the Paduans to the house of Carrara was like that of the Transalpines to their hereditary kings, or that of the Venetians to their hereditary aristocracy—an affectionate and devoted loyalty to a wise, gentle, and moderate government by those who were worthy to govern. Nor was such a state of things unfavourable to art.* Without Giotto, I doubt whether Padua

* A day or two after I had written this, I came across a passage in Sismondi's '*Histoire des Français*,' which seems to concur very well with what I here try to make out, that the feeling of the Paduans to their Carrara princes had something in common with the patriotism of the republics. He says, " Lorsque l'affection, le dévouement, le culte pour la royauté, entrèrent dans le système féodal, les mœurs éprouvèrent une révolution qui, sur le tout, doit être considérée comme avantageuse ; les sentiments prirent la place des intérêts, et les vertus purent décider les actions publiques, de préférence au calcul. La féauté est alliée de près au patriotisme, tous deux se recommandent à notre admiration par une même générosité, tous deux peuvent inspirer un dévouement également sublime, tous deux donnent de l'héroïsme à la bravoure, tandis que celle-ci n'est qu'une qualité brutale, quand elle n'a que la défense de soi-même, le plaisir dans

could have done anything ; but under the later Carraras she was quite capable of carrying on what he had begun, in the same way as a wet undrained field, which has had lime applied to it, profits nothing thereby as long as it remains in the same condition ; but as soon as it has been drained, though it be not for years afterwards, evinces by its improvement that the quickening principle has not been wasted, but only held in suspense. I must qualify, therefore, what I said some time ago about the liberty of Padua dying in giving birth to its offspring. I have no doubt that the same causes which were at work in enabling that city to hold its republican government long after it had been given up elsewhere, had also something to do with the form which its submission to a master assumed ; but I think I ought not to be understood as meaning anything more than that. The influence of the Carraras is traceable in the art of Padua, both in time and in character. About the time that the elder Francesco's usurpation placed the sceptre in the hands of a brave and able prince, Paduan art began to make its appearance in the persons of Guariento and of Giusto Menabuoi : and later on, when Padua was engaged

l'usage de ses forces, ou la vengeance pour objet." And, in truth, the philosophy of the thing shows that art must be the expression of some noble feeling. The mere fact of liberty, or the power of doing what one pleases, is not quite sufficient ; it removes obstacles, but is hardly enough to inspire ; only, as liberty generally is followed by patriotism, it may be said, in one sense, to produce art, as well as to give it room to expand. The art of Padua, however, though it had a Florentine origin, is more fitly paralleled by that of Venice. The Venetians, though their state was a republic, were not free in the strict sense of the word ; but their patriotism was not so much a sentiment as a passion, and there is no question about the excellence of their art. I think, however, that though liberty in itself, and apart from its usual concomitants, is perhaps not enough to produce art, yet that without liberty art cannot really flourish ; and while I am puzzled by the case of Verona, I am driven to believe, what I really think was the fact, that the only sufferers by the rule of Venice were the members of the governing class ; and the other orders of the state had scope for their energies to expand in any direction they pleased. And the same remark may apply to Padua.

in deadly and victorious conflict with Venice—when she was winning triumphs over the Scalas—when, after a short humiliation beneath the yoke of Gian Galeazzo, she welcomed back to her walls the hunted wanderer Francesco Novello—and when, under his guidance, she had shaken off the Milanese oppressor, and, in close alliance with Florence, she was erecting barriers against his power, which, omnipotent as he seemed to be elsewhere, he was totally unable to break down,—during that time her school of painting was reaching to still higher and higher degrees of perfection under Giusto's pupils, Giovanni and Antonio of Padua, and the still greater masters, Aldichieri da Zevio and Jacopo d'Avanzo. Nor was the Carrara influence less noticeable in the *character* of Paduan art. That chivalrous spirit, which I have noticed before as prevailing in Venetia to an extent unknown in the rest of Northern Italy, would be especially likely to gather round the home of the knightly lords of Padua; and it has been noticed by *connoisseurs*—and, I think, is discernible by the eyes of those who are not *connoisseurs*—in the art of that city. Padua abounds in the works of these painters. The Church of the Eremitani, the Cathedral baptistery, the chapels of S. Felice and SS. Philip and James in the Church of S. Antonio, and the chapel of St George hard by, are covered with frescoes by them. Fierce discussions are held as to whom these paintings are respectively to be assigned to, and I shall certainly not enter the lists to break a lance on the matter. I suppose the only point that is quite settled is, that the chancel of the Eremitani was painted by Guariento. We may content ourselves with admiring them all, and paying especial homage to the chapel of SS. Philip and James, and to that of St George. In these chapels, art seems almost to have attained perfection. Here and there a piece of bad drawing, a deficiency in foreshortening, an awkward attitude, shows that Ghi-

berti and Mantegna have yet to appear; but for all that, they are, in respect of correctness, far above any other works of the century, and in other respects matched by those of Giotto and Orcagna alone. They have about them, also, a richness of colouring which is exhibited by no other "*Giotteschi*," * and which, whether it was owing to the proximity of Venice, or, as is more probable, to the sympathies of the Paduans with feudal Germany—whose painters delighted in bright colours—impresses upon them a strong character of their own. Padua, at the end of the Trecento, following the impulse of Florence, and guided by her chivalrous princes, assumes, for a time, the foremost place in Italy, and achieves successes out of all proportion to what could have been expected of her in the cause of freedom: and again, at the same period, following the same Florentine impulse, and animated by the same spirit of chivalry, she assumes for a time the foremost place in Italy, and achieves successes out of all proportion to what could have been expected of her in the cause of art. I have purposely used the same words as nearly as possible, in speaking of her under both aspects. I doubt if there is any town, of all that we visited in the course of our tour, which has left such a pleasant memory with me as Padua has. The abundant frescoes—not only those I have mentioned, but also later ones by Mantegna and Titian, almost all of them in a state of preservation which makes one think despairingly of the miserable condition of the Campo Santo at Pisa, and also Paul Veronese's magnificent picture in Sta Giustina—combine very agreeably with the recollection of the charming inn in the quiet neighbourhood of Sant' Antonio, putting one, by its repose and countryfied appearance, in mind of an English cathedral close,—

* I hardly consider Gentile da Fabriano as a "*Giottesco*," though he shows traces of Giotto's influence; and besides, he perhaps rather belongs to the Quattrocento, when the *Giotteschi*, as a school, had been superseded by the followers of Ghiberti and Masaccio.

and perhaps I should add, with that of the bright and sunshiny spring season, which had not yet had time to become too hot, and which made everything doubly enjoyable. It is a pity that the railway from Milan to Venice has removed the necessity of passing through this interesting town, and created the inducement to see no more of it than is visible from the windows of the train as it goes by.

But after all that can be said of Umbria and Padua, 5. Florence. the chief home of art during the whole history of mediæval Italy, and above all during the Trecento, must be looked for in the city where it was regenerated, and where it first struck deep and abiding root—the republic of Florence. To give a catalogue of the names of those who there followed in the footsteps of Giotto, and perpetuated the memory of his principles in their works, would be as much beside my purpose as to enter into a detailed criticism of them would be beyond my ability. I shall only notice such points about it as may be necessary for the purpose I have immediately in hand.

In looking over the history of Florence during the whole century, it is difficult not to observe something approaching to a progressive deterioration in her policy, shown both in the character of her aims and the energy with which she follows them out. It would be easy to point to facts which may seem to contradict this view; but taking it as a whole, we shall find, I think, that in the second half of the century she was not equal to what she was in the first. The fierce zeal for freedom which had so eminently distinguished her, and had sometimes carried her too far, in the period 1300-1350, begins, after the latter date, rather to wane. At the beginning of the second half-century, indeed, she interposes her good offices with laudable zeal to preserve freedom to Bologna, and covers herself with glory at the siege of Scarparia. But the effort was not kept up as vigor-

ously as it had been begun; and though she did not abnegate her position altogether, and though she sometimes showed that she had not completely degenerated, she was hardly what she was in the days of Castruccio and Mastino della Scala. We have seen how, at one moment, she is cowed by Montreal; how she leaves the aggressions of the Visconti to be met by the resistance of their compeers, the tyrants of Eastern Lombardy, without attempting to take part in the conflict; and above all, when the gallant city of Pavia dares to set up a free government, which, if it differed at all from her own, differed for the better, how she allowed it, after a brave resistance, to be crushed down by the lords of Milan under a yoke more cruel than that which prevailed in any other part even of *their* dominions, without making any sign. We have seen, also, that a deterioration of the same sort has taken place both in her architecture and her sculpture—both starting brilliantly enough at the beginning of the century, and both gradually falling off as it advances; the nature of the change being rather a loss of energy, the Gothic independence and many-sidedness of the one falling back into the quietude of the Lombard, and the animated Giottesque of the other subsiding in the direction of Byzantine contemplativeness; and finally, during the second subdivision, both being almost entirely lost. In painting, an analogous change is also visible, though not quite to the same extent. It is perhaps not unnatural that it would be less marked in this branch of art than in the others; for as it was that to which Giotto devoted himself longest and most ardently, he might be expected to produce in it a more definite school, and to leave deeper and more enduring traces of his influence. During the first half-century the school kept well up to the mark. Taddeo Gaddi, Giotto's principal pupil, was a worthy follower of his master; and though, of course, it was not to be expected that he should be his equal in

point of genius, or that nature could go on producing a series of Giotto's in succession, he was undoubtedly a great painter. For myself, in my ignorance, I cannot bring myself to admire his frescoes of the history of the Virgin in Sta Croce: the figures there seem very clumsy, and the faces very ugly: but his shortcomings in Sta Croce (if indeed they *are* shortcomings—I believe the learned admire them) are more than made up for by the beautiful and animated figures of the Sciences, and the persons supposed to be their most distinguished votaries, in the Spanish Chapel of Sta Maria Novella.* Perhaps an even higher degree of genius is to be found in Taddeo's contemporary, Tommaso di Stefano, who goes by the name of Giotto; and these two men, who were by no means the only painters of merit of their day, may be taken as fair representatives of their school, which, in their time, might not unfairly claim to be called the school of Giotto. But during the second half-century degeneracy begins to show. Not only is there less genius, but there is less power even in the technicalities of the art, in which one might expect that at least ground would not be lost, even if none was gained. It is curious to compare the splay feet of Angelo Gaddi's figures with those produced by Nicola Pisano, more than a century before; and the same deficiency is to be seen, in almost a worse degree, in the works of a much greater man, Spinello Aretino. In the frescoes by him lately uncovered in the sacristy of the Carmine, it is almost painful to see how a good thing can be marred by bad execution. I am thinking especially of that compartment in which St Cecilia, emerging from the bath in which she

* It is not quite certain that this beautiful fresco is Taddeo Gaddi's. Vasari attributes it to him, but Lord Lindsay seems inclined to give it to Simone Memmi. Kugler gets out of the difficulty by saying nothing about it beyond that it certainly is *not* Memmi's. In his notice of Taddeo he does not so much as mention it, though he *does* mention those in Sta Croce.

has received a mortal stroke from the executioner, stands covered with a blanket, while her fellow-Christians are trying to stanch, or at least to catch, the blood which streams from the ghastly wound. The face of the martyr is, to my thinking, the most beautiful in the whole range of early art, and her attitude is not wanting in grace and pathos; but her hands and her feet seem almost to terminate in claws, and the latter are absurdly spread out into the bargain. I have spoken of Orcagna before; and I can say little more of him, except that, as a painter, he equalled, perhaps surpassed, what he was as sculptor and architect. I need hardly recall to mind the Strozzi Chapel at Sta Maria Novella, and still less the Campo Santo of Pisa. Orcagna was not exactly a Giottesco, and his paintings represent the same spirit which is seen in the Loggia de' Lanzi, and the shrine of Or' San Michele; but he profited by Giotto's technical improvements more than the regular followers of that master did, and even carried them to farther perfection: there are some parts of his works which almost seem Quattrocento. He died in 1375, and from that time to the end of the century, the honours of Trecento painting at Florence must be maintained principally by the brilliant but rugged and unprogressive Spinello, and the softer and more finished execution of Antonio Veneziano.

Other
schools.

In attributing the general development and improvement of painting all over Italy to the influence of Florence, I mentioned that there are a few exceptions; and I should not bring my "parallel" fairly out if I were not to refer to these exceptions more particularly. Generally it is true, that where political liberty, or anything analogous to it, made its appearance, it was owing in a more or less degree to that republic; but there were republics as old as she was, whose freedom was the result of their own unassisted efforts, and who developed their institutions and their national character independently of, and sometimes in

opposition to, her ; and we find this to be the case also in the arts, and not least in that with which we are now dealing. The first name that naturally occurs is that of Pisa ; but, from causes which I have tried to point out before, Pisa has fallen out of the race. She had been foremost in the earlier arts—Architecture and Sculpture ; but before the time had come for Painting to come to the front, she had met with the fatal check which had cut her off from the sources of her life, and she is unable longer to claim much of our attention. The rivalry with Florence is henceforth to be maintained by Siena.

The difference which critics have pointed out between Siena. the painters of Siena and those of Florence is one that springs from causes existing in the essential characters of the two cities, and it is one that may be well expressed by those words which I borrowed from Lord Lindsay some pages back. The latter, as a body, were dramatic ; the former, as a body, were contemplative. The Sienese were a much more religious people than the Florentines—Compared with Florence. not necessarily a better people (in fact, I may say, *certainly* not), but a people with more devotional tendencies. I think something of this may be traced to the position of the city, which was not, like Florence, situated in the smiling vale of Arno, a paradise of delight, defended on all sides by steep hills save on that where the river, bearing the barks which contained her merchandise, and which were to bring back to her the wealth of Europe and of Asia, made its gentle way to the sea ; but standing on the top of a ridge, among dreary hills, and commanding a wide and melancholy view over a desolate mountain-tract. It is a natural idea, that artists should be intimately affected by the character of the scenery wherein they dwell ; and it is, therefore, not surprising that we should find in the Florentines a brightness and variety, expressive, as it were, of happiness and content with the gay

scenes and the abounding wealth around them; and in the Sieneſe a more thoughtful and meditative caſt of mind, reflecting the character of landſcapes which, in their wild and fascinating beauty, might win on the affections, but would certainly not exalt the ſpirits. I ſhould be ſorry to ſay that the character of Sieneſe painting was owing to this cauſe; but it was certainly *congruous* (if I may uſe ſuch an out-of-the-way phraſe) with it; and this congruity is ſeen in other departments beſides that of art. I think the Sieneſe religiousneſs was not exactly identical with that of Umbria. I conceive of it as leſs myſtical, but perhaps more thoughtful, dwelling leſs in viſions than in recollections, leſs in ecſtaſies about the future than in veneration for the paſt; not a blind veneration, like that of the Chineſe, but a ſympathy with the feelings of the men of old time, or what they imagined to be ſuch, as being akin to their own—a ſympathy which found an echo in the yet living traditions of Byzantine art. This ſpirit naturally made them ſuſceptible of ſentiments of reverence and awe, and inclined them to worſhip whatever could impreſs their imagination. Above all other races the Sieneſe were diſtinguiſhed by their homage to the Virgin Mary, upon whom they had actually, after the battle of Monteaperto, beſtowed their city as a votive offering; and I think that the ſame feeling was ſhown in politics by their Ghibelliniſm.

Sieneſe
Ghibelliniſm.

It may ſeem unreaſonable in me to find an inſtance of a devotional and reverent ſpirit in the adoption of Ghibelline principles, as it would at firſt ſeem natural that ſuch a ſpirit would attach itſelf rather to the party of the Church than to that of the State; but to look upon the Guelf and Ghibelline ſtrife as one between Church and State, and nothing more, would be a very incomplete view. During the long conflict of two centuries, from the time of Hilde-

brand to that of Innocent the Fourth, the party of the Popes was the party of innovation, that of the Emperors the party of tradition. The former, it is true, sought to find old precedents for its claims, and not without some success ; but it could not hope to rival the prestige of the Empire. At the beginning of the War of Investitures, it was yet within the memory of men that the Papacy had been in the lowest depths of humiliation, degraded by its weakness—more degraded by its vices ; and it presented itself in the light of a pushing aggressive power, endeavouring to gain the upper hand by the aid of principles which might be good, but which certainly were novelties. But in the limited historical memory of those days none could see the origin of the Empire. Far back as the mental vision could extend, it could behold nothing but a series of colossal figures—great in reality, and their greatness made more awful by the mist of the dark ages which envelop them ; and even after the distance had taken away all perception of individual objects in the intervening space, there loomed behind all the rest, towering in his gigantic stature above the mists which concealed everything below, the mighty form of Charlemagne. And it was known that after him there stretched away into the unseen space a long train of predecessors—the Cæsars of ancient Rome, beings of almost divine sanctity and majesty, whose empire was at least coeval with the foundation of the Christian religion ; and who, in the plenitude of their power, could issue at the time of the Incarnation a decree for the taxation of the world. Nor were they venerated alone for the antiquity of their empire ; for this great institution, or rather the persons who were its chiefs, had in the ideas of the time a sort of prestige like that which had attached to the eponymous heroes of ancient Greece, as the maintainers of order, the defenders of the weak, the punishers

of the robber and the oppressor—a prestige expressed in the words which Frederick the Second applied to himself, as “Law incarnate upon Earth.” Even upon us, with all our superior enlightenment, with all our knowledge of the truth about it—the illegality of its origin, the essential rottenness of its system, the follies and crimes of many of those who were at its head—the name of the Roman Empire produces a considerable effect, and it is impossible not to be impressed by the contemplation of its greatness : and what must have been the effect upon the mind of that more ignorant, and therefore more impressionable age, to which that empire presented itself, not only in dimensions more colossal because more indefinite, but also resting on the basis of Divine Right, and as the Heaven-appointed minister of justice and truth ? I imagine that something of this sort lay at the bottom of Ghibellinism in its original form ; but with the Dugento that form passed away. It was not that all reverence for the majesty of the Cæsars had gone : readers of the ‘Purgatorio’ of Dante will see that it still existed ; and, from causes which I spoke of at the beginning of the sixth chapter, it was in some ways even enhanced. But though the sacredness of the Emperor’s office was acknowledged by the Italians, and though, amid the disturbances by which society was convulsed, they looked longingly across the Alps for the coming among them of the “Incarnate Law,” yet every year convinced them more and more that they might look in vain ; and the Emperors began to be regarded somewhat as the gods were regarded in the later times of classical antiquity, with feelings which Tennyson, in his ‘Lotos-eaters,’ has placed in the mouths of the companions of Ulysses. The practical aspect of Ghibellinism, as it appeared after the fall of the Hohenstaufens, was the impersonation, not of law, but of its opposite ; and the members of that party, abandoned by the distant sovereignty which had hitherto

claimed their allegiance, transferred their devotion entirely to their country ; * and thus it was that Siena became Guelf. The same principles which had made her a supporter of the Hohenstaufens made her an opponent of the Visconti. So, at the present day, might a Virginian, whose ancestors had been loyalists in the War of Independence, consider that he was only treading in their steps in serving under Lee or in the "Stonewall" brigade. The loyalty which they had owed to the Crown was, by the abandonment of his claims by George the Third, transferred to the State to which he belonged ; and, above all, would that feeling be called forth in her defence against enemies who possess every quality of the Visconti except their ability, and surpass them in the immensity and atrocity of their boastings as far as they fall short of them in their power to carry those boastings out.

I may have made too long a history of Sienese Ghibellinism, but I was anxious to show as clearly as I could that this Ghibellinism was not in opposition to, but in accordance with, the character which seems to have belonged to her, and which is impressed upon her art. About the school of Siena I do not wish to go into much detail. Like its Florentine rival, it drew large stores of inspiration from Pisa, an inspiration which was probably necessary to enable it to advance at all. But the Sienese character prevented it from operating as it did at Florence. It led to vast improvement, but it did not produce a revolution. The Byzantine recollections still maintained their ground, but they were expressed with more power, and with a greater infusion of the spirit of the age. From the very

* Of course, I do not mean that the people of Siena had not always been loyal to their commune, or that the disappearance of the imperial power made any difference in that respect : but whereas formerly they had recognised the duty of putting the interests of their State in jeopardy, if necessary, for the sake of the Empire, they now began to think that their duty to their State was paramount to all other considerations which could affect them, whether as individuals or as subjects of the Empire.

Two
branches of
the Sienese
school.

outset of the Sienese school, it has been noticed that it divides into two branches which run side by side, each alternately passing its rival and coming to the front. The one has been distinguished for the paleness, the other for the darkness, of its colouring. One's disposition would be to trace in the former the predominance of Nicola Pisano, and in the latter the predominance of Byzantinism; for, in the first place, a school which derives its origin from sculpture is likely to lay more stress on form than on colour, which a school of pure painting is not; and in the second, the classical influence would bear a character of lightness, cheerfulness, and vivacity, which would naturally show in bright and happy-looking tints, and would reject the darker and more sombre ones which reflect the deeper feeling which belonged to the art of Byzantium. I am not quite sure whether facts will quite bear this theory out; but it is not only constantly illustrated by the art of other parts of Italy, but also is so much in accordance with the historical aspect of that of Siena that I am unwilling to give it up if I can help it.

The first persons in whom these differing tendencies are discernible are Mino di Simone and Duccio di Buoninsegna. Of the former, the founder of the light colourists, nothing remains except a great fresco in the Sala di Gran Consiglio, and even of that the greater part has been repainted—repainted, it is true, by the artist who of all others was fit to preserve in its entirety the original sentiment, Mino's distinguished pupil, Simone Memmi. Duccio's fame is preserved chiefly by his great picture in the Cathedral of Siena, originally an altar-piece painted on both sides, but now sawn asunder in order to exhibit both sides of it, and its two halves hung on opposite walls. Dirt and neglect have done their very best to spoil it, but it is still a magnificent work. On one side is represented the usual composition of the Virgin and Child; the other is divided into

twenty-six compartments, each representing some event in the history of the Passion. It is rather difficult for one who is not a connoisseur to appreciate the very strong expressions of admiration which Kugler applies to this picture, but it is impossible not to admire it very highly. Apart from what may be called the "sentiment" of the picture, the correctness of the drawing and the animation of the grouping are such as might reflect credit on Giotto. Other works by him remain, and to him is attributed, with I know not how much truth, a representation of some Old Testament battle on the pavement of the Cathedral, which, if it be his, is a most wonderful work. The fire and spirit of it seem far beyond anything which one might have expected that age could have produced; and the horses contrast most favourably with those which, a century later, were painted in the battle-pieces of Paolo Uccello. So good is it, that one feels strongly inclined to ascribe it to some later artist.

Siomne Memmi, the follower of Mino, was the first Sienese painter to come into prominent notice after his master and his master's rival, who both died early in the fourteenth century. If it be true that his school represents the influence of Nicola, one would expect that it would be the first to make a start; for of course the foreign element would be most vigorous at its first appearance, and before it had had time to be modified by its intercourse with what had been there before. It would also be natural that it should endeavour to expand beyond the narrow circle of the town in which it found itself, and open itself to ideas from abroad; and accordingly, we find Simone painting not only at Pisa and Florence, but at Avignon, and even, while at the second of these cities, adapting himself, consciously or unconsciously, to the tastes of the place, and becoming somewhat of a Giottesco. There is certainly, to me, in his great fresco of the Church Militant and Trium-

phant, in the Spanish Chapel of Sta Maria Novella, an appearance of life, movement, and reality which seems hardly to belong to the school of Siena.

But after Simone and his kinsman, Lippo Memmi, had disappeared, the older element, which had not all this while been dormant, but busily engaged in asserting itself before the world, began again to predominate. The dark colourists, the Duccian school, had profited largely by the teaching of Nicola; and having done so, it was natural that the victory should remain with them. The foreign intruder had, by reason of his advantages, had the best of it at first; but it was hardly to be expected that, among such a people as the Sienese, the old traditions should be rooted out; and as soon as they had time to learn something of the use of their antagonists' weapons, the representatives of the old Byzantine school of Siena recovered the upper hand.* They kept it till the end of the century. Pietro Laurati, Ambrogio Laurati, Ugolino di Prete Ilario, Pietro di Puccio, and others, whose names it would be unnecessary to catalogue, maintained not only the ascendancy of the Duccian section, but the high character of the Sienese division of Italian art; and toward the latter part of the period their succession was illustrated by another painter, perhaps the greatest of all, who not only crowned the Trecentista school, but also survived into the following century, and provided for it a noble commencement—Taddeo di Bartolo.

Perhaps the connection between the history and the art

* I have expressed all this a great deal too strongly, and have used language about the successions of Mino and Duccio which looks as if they differed as much as the Florentine school did from the Venetian. I have done so because I found it the easier plan. In order to show the character, or what seems such, of the *nuances* which these painters represent, I paint them in strong and exaggerated colours, and then, to set it right, explain that they are so. I suppose it was on some principle of this sort that Plato in the 'Republic,' in order to find out what was justice in the character of a man, begins on a larger scale, and looks for it in a State.

of Siena may have been shown sufficiently already, but I may as well give a sort of summary of it, as compared with those of Florence, in order to make sure; and as far as I can, I will make one statement do for both Siena the republic and Siena the school. Well—early in the thirteenth century, Siena, which was far the elder of the two, began to rise into importance. As time went on, her younger rival began to show herself, and gradually rose to an equality with her—an equality which, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, became a superiority. In the fourteenth century they remained side by side working to the same end, though in a somewhat different spirit. Florence, great in herself, had her greatness enormously increased by the influence which she exercised all over the peninsula. Siena, not without many admirable qualities, and not without earning from her countrymen considerable respect, made no attempt to propagandise, sought for no influence beyond her immediate neighbourhood, and even there was somewhat overshadowed by her brilliant rival. Having said this much, I am bound to admit that the eminence of the Sienese school was more than proportioned to that of the Sienese republic. Duccio runs Giotto very hard; and if the great Giotteschi are somewhat more numerous than the great Duccians, they do not preponderate very much in quality;—Taddeo Gaddi, Giotto, Giovanni da Melano, Spinello Aretino, Antonio Veneziano, Francesco da Volterra, and their compeers, being pretty well matched by the Sienese painters whom I mentioned above; while against Orcagna, a Florentine inclining towards Siena, may be set Simone Memmi, a Sienese inclining towards Florence. The superiority of Florence, both moral and physical, was much more marked in her political aspect; and I think it a still greater flaw in the parallel, that at the very time that Taddeo di Bartolo was flourishing, the city which gave him birth was submitting to the degradation which had befallen, and was

Historical
relations of
Florence
and Siena
correspond
with those
of their Art.

befalling, so many of her sister republics, Bologna and Perugia, Lucca * and Pisa, by enrolling herself among the subjects of Gian Galeazzo.

Æmilia.

The only two schools of which I have yet to speak are those of Æmilia and Venice. "Æmilia," in fact, means Bologna, for that was the only place where there was any attempt at art. This we might expect. Western Æmilia, after having in the earlier part of the century obeyed the families of Correggio, Rossi, and Scotti, had finally passed to the all-absorbing dominion of the Visconti. Eastern Æmilia was divided among the Malatestas and the Polentas, the Ordelaffi, Manfredi, and others, whose rule was occasionally pleasantly diversified by being exchanged for that of the Popes' legates; while in the more central regions there was erected the gentler and more durable sovereignty of the Estes. Bologna was the only city which pretended to be free, and I cannot think she was a very favourable specimen of a republic. She was a few degrees better than Perugia; but her love of liberty was not very steady; and when she did show it, she did not always do so in a very attractive form. I am not sure that I do not owe her something of a grudge for Fossalta, which inclines me to speak ill of her; and this, I confess, is unjust: but it is certain that Bologna was of rather a surly and turbulent disposition, which disposed her to domineer over her weaker neighbours; and, as was perhaps natural with a people of such a character, she was frequently wielding the usual termination of factiousness—namely, tyranny. Still, on the whole, she may be considered, during the Trecento, as having been a republic; and, like most other republics, she had a school of painters. It was not without many claims to admiration. Lippo Dalmasio, surnamed "Delle Madonne," was one of

* Lucca did not do this *directly*, but she set up for herself a tyrant, Paolo Guinigi by name, who took advantage of his country being weakened by a pestilence to get himself made her sovereign, and immediately became the humble servant of the Duke of Milan.

its greatest ornaments. There is an altar-piece by him, representing his favourite subject, the Virgin and Child, in one of the churches of Bologna, which we unfortunately missed seeing, but which is described as being very lovely. I confess with shame that the only two Bolognese pictures which I have a distinct recollection of, are, first, one by Simon or Cristoforo of Bologna (I forget which, but I believe the latter), representing the early life of our Lord in several compartments—not very beautiful perhaps, but very clever, very animated, and very grotesque, almost like a German painting in the latter respect, and, I may say, very laughable ; and, secondly, Simon's glorious portrait of Pope Urban the Fifth, of which I have spoken elsewhere as a portrait, but to which I should not do justice if I did not mention it as a masterpiece of colour. I am all the more desirous of doing so, as colour was not, I think, a strong point with the *Æmilians*. There is a particular tone about them all. The later schools of Ferrara and Forlì show it as much as the *Trecentista Bolognese* do, only not quite in the same way. They have neither the brightness of Florence, nor the depth of Siena, nor the richness of Venice, but a sort of dulness or dinginess, which, if I recollect right, takes at Bologna the character of a dingy red, at Forlì of a dingy lilac, and at a Ferrara of a dingy green ; at least, that is my impression of them.

I have had very little to say about *Æmilia* ; I have still Venice. less to say about Venice. At Venice, perhaps more than anywhere else, does the remark hold good, that painting follows in the wake of sculpture ; and she is so far in the rear that sculpture has had time to degenerate before she has quite reached her best. Even in the following century, Venice did not get into her full stride ; and in the fourteenth she was only beginning to learn how to walk. Even at that early period of her art, the love of colour, which was so pronounced a characteristic of the Venetian school, is dis-

cernible : but I do not think I have any other remarks to make about it ; and it is not worth while recording the mere names of the painters. They begin to appear about the time of the war against Mastino della Scala, which first brought Venice into permanent connection with Italy ; but that connection did not lead to any practical effects for a long while. The republic did indeed organise the league of Venetia against Milan, but she took little direct part in it herself ; and the same may be said of a subsequent war which she got up between the Scalas and the Carraras. During the rest of the Trecento she was too much engaged abroad in desperate wars with the Genoese and the Hungarians to have much leisure for attending to affairs on the mainland. It is not till the beginning of the next century that she comes forward distinctly as an Italian power, and it is not till then that she comes forward distinctly as a school of painting.

We have now done with the Trecento, and the period which in political history I call Summer, and in that of the arts I call Spring. I have spoken of it at much greater length than I intended, and the only excuse for the length of the Appendix must be that it is not disproportioned to the History. I shall epitomise the rest of the story as briefly as I can. In the historical part there will be no temptation to enter into details, because they are not very interesting. In the artistic part there is so much to say that almost the only way of contracting is to leave it untouched.

THIRD
PERIOD OF
ITALIAN
HISTORY.
POLITICAL.

Autumn may be said to be included in the fifteenth century ; and there is an additional period of time, extending well into the sixteenth, which may either be called the termination of Autumn or the beginning of Winter. As I have given names to the other seasons to express their characters, I will do so again ; and the name this time shall be “ Struggles for the Balance of Power.” There are also, as before, subdivisions. The first extends from 1400

Its character
and subdivi-
sions.

(strictly speaking, 1402) to about 1425 ; the second from 1425 to 1450 ; and the third from 1450 to the end of the century, or, to be quite accurate, 1494. The supplementary period goes on to 1530.

As in the summer season, the first subdivision may be called one of preparation. The character of this century is to be that of a series of contests among powers of not very disproportionate strength, the object generally being to prevent any one from obtaining too great a preponderance over its neighbours. The international system, instead of being confined, as hitherto, to the north of the peninsula, is to include the whole of it ; and it is to be upheld principally by the policy, or rather by the mutual jealousy, of five powers, who stand out from amid the rest—to wit, Naples, Milan, Venice, Florence, and the Pope.* The wars of these powers are to be conducted on different principles from heretofore. The fashion of employing mercenaries is kept up, and even extended : but the mercenaries cease to be foreigners, and are drawn almost exclusively from among the Italians themselves ; their employment grows from a practice into a system ; and the armies and their commanders form a separate class, connected with the states which they serve only during the period of the war for which they are engaged, and owing no more allegiance to them than a counsel owes to his client. The working of this system has been so fully described in Lord Macaulay's essay on 'Machiavelli,' that I need hardly say much about it. I will only point out what I think that essay does not point out, as far as I

1st subdivision : its character.

The five powers.

The military system.

* *Five* seems to be the correct number of states to form a "balance of power." It was so with the kingdoms of the East before the establishment of the Persian empire : it was so with the republics of ancient Greece : it was so with the Mediterranean states of the second century B.C. : it was so with the Italians of the fifteenth century : it has been so, though the states composing it have been constantly changed, with Europe during the last three hundred years. It seems not impossible, however, that the rule may be broken by the admission of Spain and Italy to seats in the European Congress.

recollect,—that it was extremely favourable to the development of war as a science. When war was conducted between armies of exactly the same composition, and which were perfectly aware that they were as likely as not to be fighting side by side against a third army, or even to be fighting, each other having exchanged their employers within the space of a few months, they were not likely to be animated by any particular hostility towards their antagonists, or to feel any very burning desire for the triumph, at all risks, of their own side ; so that it became rather like a game of chess ; and if an army was so unlucky as to get into a position in which it ought to be beaten, it would accept its defeat without being so absurd as to run the risk of being cut to pieces in an attempt to escape, which would probably not be successful. To suffer such defeats as Fontenoy or Hochkirchen, to win such victories as Albuera or Inkerman, would have been considered simply barbarous. The battles were to be gained by the generals, not by the soldiers ; and their part was to study movements and positions, with an almost absolute certainty that their scientific calculations might be carried out in practice, without much chance of their being deranged by the introduction of such an abnormal element as the irregular exercise of force.

Formation
of the five
powers.

Milan.

To return : This being the character of the politics and the wars of Quattrocento Italy, let us see how the ground was prepared for it. At Gian Galeazzo's death, the duchy of Milan, which, during his reign had attained such alarming proportions, and seemed to threaten the absorption of all Northern Italy, broke up into fragments ; and Lombardy, at the commencement of the third period, presented nearly the same appearance as it did at the beginning of the second, barring always that the petty states into which it was divided were not republics but tyrannies. But the "centripetal" force which all through the middle ages had been working in Italy as in the other countries of Europe, and

which was only prevented by external causes from completing its work in the sixteenth century, was too strong to allow this state of things to remain : and after some twenty years of anarchy and disturbance, the duchy re-emerged solid, powerful, and aggressive, shorn of the Venetian, Tuscan, Umbrian, and East-Æmilian conquests of Gian Galeazzo, but extending its wide dominion over Central and Western Lombardy, Western Æmilia, and even Liguria, from the summit of the Alps to the shores of the Gulf of Genoa ; and governed by Filippo Maria Visconti, the ambitious, crafty, and unscrupulous son of Gian Galeazzo.

During the time that the power of Milan was occupied in reorganising itself, events were occurring elsewhere, the tendency of which was to prevent that power from becoming as formidable as it had been ; and these were the formation of the territorial empires of the Venetians and the Florentines. It was in one sense desirable, if not necessary, that this should be the case. But the incidents of the formation of these "empires" were most lamentable. Venice, in order to attain her object, had to crush the noblest of Italian princes : Florence, to crush the noblest of Italian republics. The means which they employed were in accordance with their ends ; and I am not sure that I do not think the cold-blooded, complacent selfishness of the Florentines even more revolting than the unblushing treachery of the Venetians. It is some consolation to think that the destruction of the house of Carrara and the republic of Pisa did the destroyers little good : or rather, it would be, but that in their punishment all Italy was punished too. The Venetians, by their conquest of Padua, and that of Verona, which they effected at the same time, committed themselves to a course of territorial aggrandisement which, after about a century of not unsuccessful prosecution of it, left them weaker than they were at its commencement : it distracted their attention from the more important business

Venice and
Florence.

of resisting the invasions of the Turks, who began after the middle of the century to threaten their eastern possessions: it entailed heavy expenses, which were not counterbalanced by the profits they derived from the annexed provinces; and, finally, its apparent success aroused the jealousy or the rapacity of the princes of Europe, who, without provocation, took advantage of the Republic being weakened by a damaging Turkish war to combine against her in the league of spoliation which I have mentioned before as that of Cambray. The Florentines suffered even more, for they lost the moral ascendancy in Italy which they had hitherto maintained and generally deserved; and before very long began to experience the usual fate which awaits aggressive republics—a fate which we are not unlikely to see illustrated on a large scale at no very distant day—that of submitting to the rule of a master; and if that rule was at first mild and gentle, exercised by the hands of those who were worthiest to exercise it, and taking the form rather of influence than of command, it was not the less the high-road to direct tyranny, which, when it did come, came in the most odious of all forms, that of an instrument of foreign domination.

Naples.

It was during the same period, too, that Naples first came prominently forward as an Italian power. The expedition of Charles of Durazzo against that kingdom, which I had occasion to speak of in the tenth chapter as incidentally connected with the revolutions of Florence, was in the end successful. The state of Southern Italy was not such as to facilitate an effective resistance: Joanna's armies were defeated and her fortresses betrayed, and at length the unhappy queen herself was taken captive, and, after being imprisoned for nine months, strangled by order of her merciless enemy, who succeeded her as Charles the Third. He did not enjoy his conquest long, being assassinated by some of his near relatives, as was not unusual with that branch of the Capets, and his crown descended to his son Ladislaus.

The latter's title was not uncontested, for Joanna, in her extremity, had adopted as her successor Louis, head of a branch of the royal house of France, which, like that which it attempted to replace at Naples, bore the title of Anjou ; but he finally succeeded in establishing himself. As soon as he had done so, he began to meditate the extension of his realm at the expense of his neighbours, and he very soon proved himself a worthy follower of the Lombard tyrants of the Trecento. He overran Central Italy, occupied Rome, and, after making himself master of Umbria, pushed on to Tuscany. The Florentines, who had so recently been saved as by fire from a terrible enemy in the north, were naturally much alarmed at the progress of this unexpected assailant from the south. They called on the house of Anjou to assist them, and its chief answered to the call. But he was no match for the astute and energetic Ladislaus. After a short contest he retired, baffled and humiliated, to France ; and his rival, now secure against attacks in his rear, again advanced northwards, conquering as he went. Rome, the Patrimony of St Peter, Umbria, on which he had been obliged to relax his hold during his fight with Louis of Anjou, submitted again ; his armies pressed on and were everywhere victorious in Tuscany ; and Florence was expecting to have to defend her existence against an enemy who, with all the ability and much of the character, combined more than tenfold the resources of Castruccio. But fortune was not tired yet of befriending her. Ladislaus, when at the head of his formidable army he was marching from triumph to triumph, was seized by a grievous sickness ; he was forced to quit the camp and return homewards, and he reached Naples only just in time to die there. At his death the kingdom was inherited by his sister Joanna, who was not only a woman but a most contemptible one. She allowed herself to be governed by unworthy favourites, without even possessing the merit of being constant in her attachments :

those whom she discarded revenged themselves by stirring up plots, even rebellions, against her : fickle in her alliances as in her affections, she would encourage foreign princes with the hope of being adopted to succeed to her childless throne, and then disinherit them in favour of others whom, for the moment, she fancied more : she would then, from some pique or caprice, take up with them again, and of course each competitor, fancying in his turn that he was aggrieved and insulted, would vindicate his claims by force. During her reign, and it was a long one, Naples could not be very formidable to the independence of her neighbours ; but from the time of Ladislaus she becomes an Italian power, and her revolutions become connected by more and more intimate relations with those of the rest of the peninsula.

The Popes.

The Popes may be despatched in few words. The progress of the schism does not concern us much, save in as far as the subjects of the Vatican in Central Italy took advantage of the weakness produced thereby to set up for themselves again, sometimes as republics, more often as tyrannies. People got tired of the squabble at last : they insisted upon it that the pope and the anti-pope should come to some agreement as to which was which, and finding them both obstinate, as was perhaps to be expected, a council, assembled at Pisa in 1409, deposed them both, and nominated another, — a clever expedient, which only led to there being three popes instead of two. The Council of Constance, in 1414, in order to meet this difficulty, nominated a fourth ; but they had had the good sense to get hold of two of the pretenders beforehand, and the good fortune to be able to frighten them into resigning. As for the third, he was gradually deserted by his followers, and though a good many held by him to the last, yet they did not care to keep the thing up by appointing a new one ; and thus at last the schism came to an end. Pope Martin the Fifth, who now had the obedience

of the Church, was soon engaged in troubles of his own, which lasted his pontificate out, and continued into that of his successor Eugenius the Fourth. The result of the long conflict of "obediences" had been to weaken men's respect for the popedom; the result of the recent councils had been to awaken a spirit of self-assertion in the clergy: and a strong and very nearly successful attempt was made to modify the despotism, or rather bureaucracy, of Rome, and to introduce something like what we should nowadays call constitutional principles, into the government of the Church. But this attempt failed: the personal character of the Pope who was enabled to defeat it had very little to do with the issue of the contest, for Eugenius was one of the most despicable of men: but a variety of causes concurred to assist him; the Papacy triumphed, and the Reformation was the consequence. But with this we have nothing to do. It is enough for my present purpose to say that from the termination of the schism the Popes began again to reside in Rome: that by degrees they recovered the greater part of their states west of the Apennines; and that, as lords of a considerable slice of Central Italy, they took rank during this century as the fifth of the Italian powers.

Below these five came a multitude of others, of lesser Minor powers. though varying magnitude; some tyrannies, some republics, some alternating from one to the other—Savoy, Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino, Genoa, Siena, Lucca, Perugia, Bologna, and others of third-rate importance, principally to be found in Central Italy. Genoa is the only one of these which Genoa. seems to invite any notice. From the part she has hitherto played, one might expect to find her in the first rather than in the second rank; and if I had gone into any details as to the War of Chiozza, I should have shown still further cause for expecting it. But she wore herself out by her internal feuds: she was almost always in a state of civil war; and she fell into the habit of repeating the disastrous

experiment which she tried after the battle of Cagliari—that of quieting herself by submission to a foreign power—sometimes the Dukes of Milan, sometimes the Kings of France. She used, it is true, to get tired of subjection after a little, and then she would revolt and reclaim her independence ; but it was only to surrender it again ; and, in spite of the valour and seamanship of her citizens, it is perhaps not surprising that she should no longer claim to be considered as a power of the first class.

Growth of
the military
system.

So much for the five Powers. I must say something about the origin of the military system which I described above. It was only at the very end of the Second Period that the Italians began to understand that their countrymen could be made into soldiers ; and this discovery, which was the means of saving the peninsula from being overrun by foreign adventurers in the fifteenth century as it had been in the fourteenth, was due to Gian Galeazzo. It is curious that while the Florentines, the defenders of Italian independence, relied for doing so upon foreign aid, its enemy learnt more and more to trust to the arms of Italians. In one campaign they invited a French general, the Count of Armagnac, to attack the Milanese dominions on one side, and sent an English general, John Hawkwood, to attack them on another : Gian Galeazzo gave the command of his forces to an Italian, and was completely successful : the Frenchman was defeated, and either killed or taken prisoner ; the Englishman was forced to escape as best he might to avoid a similar fate, and to make, through a country which for leagues and leagues had been laid under water, one of the most remarkable, but also one of the most disastrous, retreats in history. But the great event which established the reputation of the Italian soldiers occurred in 1401. In that year the Emperor Robert, in alliance with, or rather in the pay of, the Florentines, descended the Alps at the head of a German army to make war upon Gian Galeazzo ; and

this army, commanded as it was by the Emperor himself, was met in fair field by the Milanese forces, thoroughly and completely defeated, and only saved from total ruin by the appearance of a body of Italian horse led by one of the Carraras. From that day forward the efficiency of Italian troops was undisputed. At the beginning of the Quattrocento, among the armies of *condottieri* which formed themselves for the purpose of letting out their services for hire among the different states, two earned pre-eminent distinction. Their tactics were conducted on opposite principles; the one striving to snatch success by daring, the other to ensure it by forethought; but they were both guided by consummate skill and knowledge of the art of war: and whenever one of them was employed by one party in a war, the opposite party was pretty sure to try and secure the other. They went by the names of the Bracceschi and Sforzeschi armies, after those of their respective leaders, Braccio da Montone and Giacomuzzo Attendolo, surnamed Sforza. Just at the conclusion of the first or preparatory subdivision of the Third Period, both these brave warriors passed from the scene, the one killed in battle, the other drowned in the passage of a river. Sforza was succeeded in the command of his army by his son, Francesco: the Bracceschi elected as their leader the ablest of their first general's lieutenants—Nicolo Piccinino.

Bracceschi
and Sforzes-
chi.

The character of the second subdivision of the Third Period is in some respects not unlike that of the third subdivision of the Second, for its leading feature is the resistance of the Florentines to the Visconti of Milan. But neither Florentines nor Visconti are what they had been. The change in the Visconti is not very remarkable, for it is merely a further development of the progressive deterioration which seems to have been a rule in their house. That rule was in operation all through the Trecento. Matteo Visconti, who was Signor of Milan at its commencement, was probably a better, though perhaps not a braver or

2d subdivi-
sion: its
character.

Milan.

abler man than any of his sons ; and his sons transcended his grandsons (except Azzo) far more than they were transcended by him. I have spoken of this change for the worse as having been most strongly marked when Archbishop Giovanni was replaced by his three nephews, whose degeneracy, as compared with what had been, was as a fall to a decline. But even after their time it went on, though more gently. Gian Galeazzo was indeed superior to Bernabo, the ablest of the elder generation, in some ways, for he was a much better ruler, and refrained from the odious exactions which had made his uncle the terror of the Lombards ; but if he was not actually a much worse man than Bernabo (which would have been difficult), his memory is certainly loaded with the weight of more atrocious crimes—crimes which make one sometimes inclined to consider him the most consummate villain in all history—and he added to these qualities that of a personal timidity which amounted to cowardice. Filippo Maria was a villain of a lower degree still. Like his father, he was a coward, though, like his father, he could show courage when he was driven to it by necessity : like his father, he had unmeasured ambition and lust of dominion : like his father, his policy was crafty and able, and never hampered in the very least by any scruples of conscience or of honour. But here the resemblance stops. Filippo Maria had not the self-restraint, the patience, the inflexible determination which had given greatness—I had almost said respectability—to the wickedness of Gian Galeazzo. He multiplied ruinous exactions upon his subjects in a way that his father had had the good sense to avoid doing ; he formed clever and intricate schemes of policy, carried them out a little way, and then dropped them just as they seemed likely to be successful ; he picked out able men, as he had a great talent for doing, treated them with confidence, intrusted great things to them, and then suddenly threw them over-

Filippo
Maria Vis-
conti.

board, thereby not only ruining his own projects, but also making them into formidable enemies ; so that, clever and powerful as he was, he never became quite the same terrible spectre in the eyes of the Italians that his father had been.

The change at Florence was more important. Early in ^{Florence.} this subdivision, the aristocracy, to which Florence had owed so much of her prosperity and greatness, the aristocracy of the Albizzi and the Parte Guelfa, lost its hold on the Government ; and the party which supplied it was at first represented and finally concentrated in a single family, that of the Medici. Its head, the celebrated Cosmo, though ^{Cosmo de' Medici.} not a direct descendant, inherited the opinions and the position of the fiery democrat who led the van in the assault on the Parte Guelfa in 1378 ; but parties and party feelings had grown much less violent since that time, and he stood in much the same relation to Salvestro that a Radical of 1863 stands in to a Radical of 1832. After the overthrow of the Albizzi (who, by the way, justified it afterwards by intriguing with Filippo Maria to induce him to make war on Florence in order to effect their restoration), Cosmo reigned supreme, not as lord of Florence, but as her most influential citizen ; and it cannot be said that his supremacy was altogether undeserved. He was the wealthiest man in Italy—I had almost said, regard being had to all the circumstances, the wealthiest man mentioned in history—and his wealth was in a great degree owing to his own activity and judgment. The use he made of it was most creditable, for he would not only do great things for the relief of the poor, but also assist by loans, without interest, numbers of that class who are now called “distressed gentlefolks,” to whom, without allowing the fact to transpire, he would supply the means of staving off ruin in a manner that could not offend their pride—it was not known till after his death what an immense amount of good he had unostentatiously done in this way ; and his

name is proverbial as one of the most munificent, as well as of the most judicious, fosterers of art and literature that the world has ever known. He was, besides, of a temper which eminently fitted him for the duties of a statesman—calm, moderate, watchful, and persevering ; and of his patriotism there could be no doubt. Yet Florence rather lost caste by surrendering herself so completely to the guidance even of such a man as this ; and her doing so, as we shall see, proved in the end disastrous to the welfare and freedom of Italy.

War between Milan and Florence.

However, it was before Cosmo attained this height of power, and while yet the Albizzian aristocracy held the reins of office, that Florence and Milan were first brought into collision. Filippo Maria's attempts to extend his dominion into Romagna alarmed that watchful Government so much that they felt it necessary to check him ; and, allying themselves with his antagonists, they pushed their forces across the Apennines, and declared war. But their enemy had in his service some of the ablest commanders in the peninsula ; his troops were of the first quality ; and he showed himself more than their match. The Florentine armies suffered defeat after defeat—their resolute employers would not give in—they kept sending fresh troops to support them ; but the result was always the same ; and at length the Government saw that they could not carry on the war profitably without assistance, and made up their minds to send an embassy to ask for the alliance of the Venetians.

The Florentines seek the alliance of the Venetians.

Debate at Venice.

But that I have resolved to compress this Third Period as far as the first duty of making the story clear will permit me, I should have been tempted to draw something of a picture of the meeting of the Venetian signory when these proposals were laid before it by the Florentine envoys. It was a proposal on the acceptance or rejection of which hung much of the future destiny of Venice—more, indeed, than her wisest and most far-seeing counsellors at the time could dream. Without going into the details of the debate,

we may see the councillors as they sit—the wise old doge, Tommaso Mocenigo, with the stern and noble features which may still be seen sculptured on his monument in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, presiding in the midst. The procurator Francesco Foscari is ardent for war, and is not without strong reasons therefor. But the doge speaks in answer, fearful lest the Signory should be carried away by the warlike ardour of the “youthful procurator,” as he persists in calling him, with a superior air, which must have been rather amusing to most of his audience, and very irritating to Foscari, who was past fifty. The speech which he delivers has been preserved by Sanuto, from whom it is abridged by Daru. To our apprehensions it seems a wonderful jumble of bad taste, false logic, misapplied history, pedantic classicality, and misplaced learning; and it is difficult to believe that it could really have been spoken by such a man as we know in other ways that Mocenigo was, till one recollects that these absurdities were in accordance with the taste of the age, and were a further development of the detestable style of rhetoric introduced first by Petrarch. The arguments which, after blowing off all the Petrarchian froth, are to be found in his speech, are drawn chiefly from the material wealth and prosperity of Venice, which he represents as founded upon peace and commerce, and the danger that they would be destroyed by a war policy. One can understand the feelings of Foscari’s supporters as they listen to this. How mean and sordid, and at the same time shortsighted, must seem such reasoning as compared with the demands of the higher policy, the necessity of curbing the ambition of Milan, and preserving the balance of power—above all, the peril to their conquests on the mainland. Yet the Signory, after full debate, make up their minds to be guided by the counsels of the elder statesman, who seems to have had an enormous and not quite undeserved influence with them;

and the Florentine envoys have to return disappointed homewards. To us, who can afford to be wise after the event, it is plain that their decision was wise, and that Mocenigo's nonsensical verbiage, like Cromwell's, was the cloak which wrapped the expression of a wise and prescient judgment. But the question could not rest here. The Florentines, repulsed at first, came again and again : their arguments appeared to gain force with each time : they were powerfully supported by revelations of meditated Viscontine aggression, brought by an illustrious deserter from the Milanese court, the *condottiere* Carmagnola ; and they were still more powerfully supported in the Venetian councils themselves, for Mocenigo had passed away, and, in spite of the counsels which he gave to the elders of Venice on his deathbed, Francesco Foscari reigned in his stead. His election as doge, the most severely contested of any in Venetian history, was a sign that there was war impending as its result ; and it was not long before it came. Most disastrous was the new policy to the fortunes of Venice in the long run ; but Foscari was not to blame for this. It was impossible that he should foresee the storm of Cambray, or perhaps that he should fully appreciate the dangers of Turkish hostility ; and, besides, I am inclined to think that he had no choice. If Mocenigo's course was wise, it is probable that Foscari's was necessary. The seizure of Padua and Verona dragged their possessors, whether they would or not, into the whirl of Italian politics ; and in the council-chambers of the Republic a fanciful imagination might see the shade of the injured Carrara urging his destroyers to the course which their seizure of his territories entailed, and which was alike the consequence and the punishment of their crime.

Wars between Venice and Milan.

So there was war in Lombardy between Venice and Milan. After the war came a truce, which they called a peace ; then war again almost immediately ; "and so *ad*

infinitum," in the beautiful language of the poet. The Venetians at their first rush gained great advantages. Two successive campaigns were crowned respectively by the acquisition of the important towns of Brescia and Bergamo, which Filippo Maria, more alarmed perhaps at the prestige than at the valour of his enemies, surrendered in somewhat of a panic. But afterwards fortune seemed to turn against them ; the Duke began to think he had been frightened too easily, and that he ought to have these places back again ; and he pressed his advantages with might and main. But the Venetians were not people lightly to give up anything they had gained. They engaged the celebrated Francesco Sforza as the commander of their forces ; and from that time forward the wars between the two states became a species of trial of skill between him and Piccinino, in which they earned for themselves much credit without gaining much advantage for their employers. The wars of this century are generally preternaturally dull ; but these Veneto-Milanese campaigns, though not of any essential interest, are not without episodes well worthy of attention. Such is the story of the gallant Carmagnola, who rose by his merit from the position of a simple soldier to that of the first general in Italy ; who proved more than a match for Piccinino and Sforza put together ; who was alternately the victim of Viscontine caprice and Venetian suspicion ; and whose ultimate fate must always remain a stain on the memory of Venice, even if, as is not unlikely, it was deserved by his own treason. Such also is the heroic defence of Brescia by the Venetians, assisted by the people of the town—such the adventurous march of Gattamlata round the Lake of Garda ; and the famous exploit of the Venetians in conveying a flotilla for two hundred miles overland, part of the transit being over rugged and precipitous hills, and finally launching it on the waters of the same lake ; and the daring and successful escape of Piccinino from the

castle of Tenna ; and the good fortune of Sforza, who, when surrounded on every side by the armies of his rival, and in momentary expectation of ruin, was suddenly relieved from his embarrassments by the appearance in his camp of an agent of Filippo Maria's, offering not only an honourable peace for his employers, but the hand of the Duke's daughter, with a province as her dowry, for himself. I should be doing more than I wish to do if I were to go into any details about these matters ; but naming them will be enough to show that the wars of the Quattrocentisti Italians were not unmitigatedly stupid.

Other wars. There were other wars going on in Italy at the same time : Florentine attempts to distract Filippo Maria, by taking his forces in the rear, while they were engaged in front with the Venetians ; efforts more or less successful to enlarge the territory of their state—one, in particular, to get possession of Lucca, commencing in injustice, continuing in cruelty, and ending in failure ; wars for the Neapolitan succession, which at last falls to Alfonso, King of Aragon and Sicily ; endless wars in Central Italy, where, among other things, Francesco Sforza forces the Pope to give up to him the March of Ancona ; and many others which we need take no notice of.

Death of
Filippo
Maria.

In 1447 died Filippo Maria ; and with him ended the direct line of the Visconti who had ruled at Milan, and also the ducal dignity which Kaiser Wenzel (more generally called Wenceslaus) had granted to Gian Galeazzo. There was none who could have any claim or even pretension to the succession. Francesco Sforza, indeed, asserted a right to it as the husband of the late duke's daughter : but besides the fact that no tyranny had ever been transmitted, to the best of my belief, by female succession, Milan was now a duchy of the Empire ; and from the right of inheritance of imperial fiefs women were debarred. The Milanese people considered, therefore, that the signory which had been con-

ferred by their ancestors on Oddone and Matteo Visconti and their descendants had, from failure of heirs, reverted to the granters; and they resolved to re-establish the republic. Con-
 sidering the long slavery that the Milanese had undergone, considering how cruel and debasing that slavery had been, and considering that in spite of this they had never made any attempt to shake it off—for I do not class as such the occasional conspiracies to which individual nobles might be driven by personal wrongs,—it is somewhat remarkable that they should have shown themselves capable of freedom at all, or that their new republic should have succeeded as well as it did. Yet it seemed that the effect of the Viscontine rule had not been so much that of a school of corruption, as of a school of adversity; and a lesson may be drawn from this of hopefulness for the future of down-trodden races. It must have been a complete unsettlement of all the ideas of the Italians that Milan, so long the tyranny *par excellence*, and as such the bugbear of all minds, should suddenly stand forth as a free city, seeking for no advantages beyond the preservation of her own independence, and instead of threatening the safety of Florence and Venice, stretching out her arms to them, and begging to be received as their sister and ally. It seemed as if a special interposition of Providence had occurred to give to the Italians, in spite of all their sins and shortcomings, such a chance of safety, honour, and welfare, individual freedom, and independence as a nation, at the eleventh hour, as they had perhaps never had at the most flourishing periods of their history.

Republic of
Milan re-
stored.

Chance of
securing the
independ-
ence of
Italy.

But of this special and undeserved mercy the people on whom it was bestowed proved themselves unworthy. It is a sad tale to tell how wantonly they flung this their last chance away,—sad to think what might have been the result if the three great republics had been united in close confederacy together—a confederacy which, had they been true

Shortsighted policy of Venice and of Florence.

to one another, no foreigners could have broken,—if Milan had guarded the passes of the Central Alps, and Venice, mistress of Friuli, Istria, and Dalmatia, had held the marches against the house of Austria, while the warlike princes of Savoy, and the hardy republicans of Genoa, had watched the frontiers of France,—if the soldiers of the Peninsula, strong in the tactics of Braccio and Sforza, Barbiano and Carmagnola, had learnt to add to them the enthusiasm of patriotism and the spirit which belongs to a national army; and saddest of all to think that this might have been, and was not, because the Italians would not have it so. The wise and sagacious Venetians shut their eyes to the great future which might have opened before them, and could see nothing but the chance of adding to their dominions in Lombardy. The Florentines, who should have been the special defenders of liberty, had abdicated their position by giving themselves up to the guidance of Cosmo de' Medici; and Cosmo de' Medici had no great love for free governments, and was a close friend of Francesco Sforza. It was evident that the love of freedom, if it existed anywhere in Italy, existed only in the city of the Visconti; and Sforza soon found out that the republic which stood between him and the attainment of his desires would be defended by its own citizens alone. He advanced to its overthrow. The militia of Milan could not expect to cope in the field with the powerful and well-appointed army which Sforza led against them, and were driven behind the walls of their capital, where they stood at bay. Their cool and skilful antagonist did not care to face their despair by making an assault on the city; and he contented himself with trying the effects of a blockade. For many months this cruel game went on. The Milanese would not give way: for the sake of freedom, pure freedom, they endured, though they knew that submission would bring peace and plenty, horrors such as the citizens of

Haarlem afterwards bore with the knowledge that it was only endurance that could save them from the infliction of every atrocity that Spanish cruelty could devise. The agony of the famine which was destroying them was embittered by the sight of the banners of a Venetian army, which had been sent by the signory nominally for their relief, but *only* nominally so : for Venice had a hope that in despair of ultimate victory, and driven to a choice of masters, the Milanese would prefer her rule to that of Sforza, and that thus the Queen of the Adriatic might become also Queen of Lombardy : and her generals were directed to watch Sforza's movements, and cut off his supplies, but not to risk a battle. So the siege went on : the famine within the walls grew worse and worse ; all the horrors of a blockade were accumulated on the heads of the unhappy Milanese ; and at length the chiefs of the republic saw that there was no longer any hope, and that it was necessary to yield to one or other of the armies in their neighbourhood. They would have preferred the Venetians : but the indignation of the people against the false allies, who for their own selfish purposes could sit still and quietly watch them perishing of starvation, was too strong to be resisted ; and the gates were at length, in March 1450, opened to Sforza. Thus commenced the second dynasty of the Dukes of Milan ; and the conquest of that great city by the first of the new line, may be held as a fitting close for the second, and a fitting opening for the third, of the subdivisions of the Italian autumn.

Francesco Sforza becomes Duke of Milan.

Whether the Milanese would have been better advised had they yielded to the counsels of their rulers, and given themselves up to Venice, it is difficult to say. I am disposed to think that they would ; for a strong government, including all Lombardy, would have been the best method left open to them for holding the foreigner at bay. But one can hardly be surprised at their choice. Even had

they foreseen the results of the establishment of the Sforzas, it is doubtful whether at that moment passion might not have induced them to welcome any rulers rather than the cold-blooded and selfish Venetians ; and those results it was impossible that they *should* foresee. Upon the Venetians themselves, and in a remoter degree upon the Florentines, one cannot help looking upon it as the commencement of their punishment—punishment, not only for the judicial blindness which rejected the alliance of the Milanese, but also for the crimes of which I cannot help thinking that judicial blindness the result. At the beginning of the century, Venice had given way to a lust of conquest, which drove her to violate every rule of conscience and of honour ; and she is punished by being allowed to become possessed by it to an extent which causes her, for its sake, to be the means of overthrowing the best bulwark by which her conquests could have been preserved. And at the same time, Florence had destroyed the independence of a sister republic ; and *she* is punished by being driven to sacrifice her own to the counsels of one man, and under their guidance, suffering to fall the only protection which could have enabled her to keep what freedom remained to her. Milan, as a republic, might have defended the possessions of Venice and the liberties of Florence ; but, as would have been said in classic days, the one was goaded by the furies of Carrara, the other by those of Pisa : the chances of salvation for themselves and for Italy were offered to them and placed within their grasp : the offer was rejected ; and it came again no more.

3d subdivision: its character.

Of the third subdivision I have little to say. A change has come over the scene. One might have expected that Milan, so formidable under her old civilian rulers, would have become doubly so under the able and politic soldier who has now ascended her throne. But Sforza's ambition is not so all-embracing as that of his predecessors. He is content

with what he has gained ; and he seeks no more for the future than to defend himself from attack. With the ambition of Milan and the resistance of Florence ceases the moral interest of the Italian history, and there has now ceased also that minor interest which may attach to the contests for territory between Milan and Venice. The annals of the latter half of the fifteenth century really bore the character which I fancy that some people think belongs to those of Italian history generally. The impossibility of fixing them in the recollection can only be conceived by those who have made the attempt,—and one may console one's self for one's failure by the reflection that it makes very little difference whether one remembers them or not, for their importance is as near an approach to zero as that of any annals of human history can be. War without glory, peace without security, alliances without faith, treaties made almost avowedly to be broken when convenient, battles in which not a single life is lost, extraordinary statecraft used to compass incomprehensible ends, extraordinary military genius employed in marching backwards and forwards through uninteresting campaigns, extraordinary wickedness indulged in for the sake of infinitesimal advantages,—these are the main characteristics of the final period of Italian history. Tyranny even has deteriorated. The change for the worse which had been seen when the signory of Milan passed from the hands of the sons of Matteo to those of the sons of Stefano, is as nothing to that which comes over it now. Tyrants of the stamp of those who now ruled in Italy had indeed been known before, and we have seen something of them ; but they had not been the rule : and the principle which produced them could also produce something better, or at least more respectable, as long as there were Visconti to be found at Milan. The old tyrants might have been odious, but none could say they were contemptible : but those who now sat on the high places of Italy had

Character of
the tyrants.

Conspira-
cies.

the vices of their predecessors without their talents : and the sceptre of the terrible Visconti is in the hands of the wretched Galeazzo Sforza. It would be a relief in such a scene as this if some daring and ambitious villain could be seen—some one who could recall the memory of Gian Galeazzo ; and one is rather glad to hail one on a small scale in Sigismund Malatesta of Rimini : but the majority have neither the craft necessary to despoil their neighbours nor the courage to attack them : they have not even energy enough to form a wish to do so ; and they live in a state of inglorious half-peace, dreaded by none but their own subjects, but by them dreaded exceedingly.* The horror in which the princes of that day were held is shown by the constant conspiracies which everywhere broke out against them, not generally to depose but to assassinate them ; and such was the state of public feeling, that the murder of a tyrant, so far from being thought a crime, was considered a laudable action. And there is this to be said for the conspirators of Quattrocento Italy : that the outrages inflicted by the tyrants were such as almost to justify anything that could be done to put a stop to them : that except by means of the dagger there was no hope of their being stopped, as no elements for a popular insurrection remained : and that those who ventured on this their only remedy took their life, and more than their life, in their hands ; for the attempt was generally made in the face of day, and whether they succeeded or whether they failed, they were pretty sure to be sacrificed, in the one case to the alarmed wrath of the tyrant, in the other to the vengeance of his successors ; and they had to fear not only death, but death accompanied by

* There were exceptions to this rule. The Estes and Gonzagas have recovered from the degradation of the latter part of last century ; and they were matched by the Montefeltri, counts and dukes of Urbino. All these houses produced not only liberal patrons of literature and art, but also military leaders of considerable eminence.

the worst tortures which the refined cruelty of the age could devise.

At the beginning of the subdivision, though things were getting worse and worse, at least it might be said that the counsels of the five powers were directed by men of considerable ability and not very bad character. Alfonso of Aragon and Sicily, King of Naples, Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, Francesco Foscari, Doge of Venice, Cosmo de' Medici, chief citizen and virtual ruler of Florence, and Pope Nicholas the Fifth, were all men not without claims to respect. They were none of them, perhaps, quite immaculate as politicians : but, as times went, they were honest in their dealings, and had they lived in a more favourable age, would probably have been as good as their neighbours ; while in ability they were certainly far above the average, and most of them were distinguished for the zealous, and, at the same time, judicious encouragement which they gave to letters. The worst accusation that lies against them is, that they were enemies to liberty ; and that in consequence they ruined, though without knowing it, the only remaining hopes of preserving the national independence of their country : but even admitting this, one is obliged to acknowledge that they were better than most of their contemporaries ; and against Alfonso, the noblest in character as well as the greatest in power of the five, I doubt whether even this charge can be fairly brought. The degeneracy of the age may be seen by comparing them with their successors.

The strongest cases are those of Naples and Milan. Alfonso of Aragon's character was of a higher stamp than Francesco Sforza's, and his son's was less contemptible than Galeazzo's. Ferdinand, the new ruler of Naples, was inferior to his father in every way ; he was cruel and treacherous, and no great soldier ; but he did not quite sink to the level of the tyrannical debauchee who was the curse of Milan. His reign was one long war against his subjects, whom

Naples and
Milan.

his misgovernment forced into rebellion, and who could always find leaders in the rival house of Anjou ; but he succeeded at length in making himself absolute master of his dominions, and died just in time to escape seeing them inundated by the contending armies of France and Spain : Galeazzo perished by the daggers of three youths of distinguished Milanese families (one a Visconti, by the way), who were maddened by his outrages, and thought that they were doing a righteous deed in ridding their country of a monster.

Florence.

Less violent was the change which befell Florence on the death of Cosmo de' Medici. His son Piero was a man of far inferior abilities to his father, and besides, was prevented by the weak state of his health from paying the same attention to public affairs. But he was neither a bad man nor a fool ; and during Cosmo's life there had been formed a considerable party among the leading men of Florence who had attached themselves to the fortunes of the family, and were anxious to uphold its ascendancy ; so that while many were anxious to keep him up, there was no particular desire to pull him down. Times, too, were pretty quiet. Milan, under Galeazzo Sforza, was not formidable to her neighbours ; and the other three powers had plenty of business elsewhere. So Piero the invalid was acknowledged still as chief man of the Florentines ; and whatever his health allowed him to do he did pretty well. Nor do I think that the Florentines were very badly off. They had plenty of that liberty which consists in being allowed to follow the bent of their minds ; they were not oppressed ; and they had not the humiliation of feeling that they were under a master. Great incidental evils followed from the ascendancy of the Medici : but practically, and at the time, I doubt whether it was not productive of more happiness than that of the Albizzi had been.

The Papacy.

The alteration which appeared in the Papacy was differ-

ent again. Nicholas the Fifth, who was in many ways a very estimable pontiff, and would be more so, if it was not for the execution of Porcaro—an execution perhaps necessary, but certainly deplorable—was followed, after an interval chiefly remarkable from the fact that the pope who filled it bore the ill-omened name of Borgia, by Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, who took the title of Pius the Second. He was one of the best of the whole line : in fact, with the exception of Nicholas aforesaid, he was the only decent successor of St Peter since the time of Urban the Fifth. He was not a saint exactly ; in his earlier life he had been more distinctly a man of the world than was quite consistent with the clerical character ; but he was, I truly believe, a just man, an ardent patriot, a sincere Christian, and a zealous performer of his duties as pope ; and his death may almost be considered a martyrdom ; for it was brought on by the exertions, too great for his advanced age, which he made to hurry on the preparations for a fleet to check the progress of the Turks, at that time so menacing to Christendom, and by disappointment at finding that, through the lukewarmness of others, those preparations must be futile. He deserves to be bracketed with Andrea Dandolo ; but Dandolo had the satisfaction, denied to Piccolomini, of knowing that he had not died in vain. Yet there was raised a monument to the latter, perhaps more interesting even than the tomb in the Baptistery of St Mark, not by the gratitude of Christendom, but by the pride of one city, the city of his birth. The Piccolomini, as I think I have said elsewhere, belonged to Siena ; and in the *Libreria* of Siena Cathedral may be seen the history of Pope Pius's life, depicted in a series of magnificent frescoes by the gifted Umbrian Pinturicchio, not without (it is said) the assistance of Raphael.*

* It used to be considered that these frescoes were altogether by Raphael ; but I fancy that the *general* authorship of Pinturicchio is now universally admitted.

The succession of good popes had been woefully scanty. Since 1200, and from before that date, there had been only three, out of all who had borne the tiara, whom posterity can really respect—namely, Gregory the Tenth, Benedict the Eleventh, and Urban the Fifth; and to have two such popes as Nicholas and Pius coming so close together was almost portentous. It looked as if there were a greater crop of virtue being raised than the soil would bear; and it might be feared that so much goodness would be sure to be followed by crime enough to preserve the usual proportion. If such fears were entertained, they were justified with a vengeance. As one looks along the line of Pius the Second's successors, one's eye is carried past a series of names recalling the worst period of modern history, some of them marvels of iniquity, such as had not been known since the Marozian period, and hardly even then; and one is hardly inclined to stop till more than a century later, when one reaches the name of Pius the Fifth. The series opens with Sixtus the Fourth; and it must be admitted that if the cardinals wished to make up for the good deeds of Nicholas and Pius, they could not have made a better choice. I suppose Alexander the Sixth is generally considered to have been *the* worst man who ever sat on St Peter's chair; * and if in the perfection of his crimes Alexander is, as Michael Angelo in the perfection of his art, Sixtus is certainly as Luca Signorelli. He was an able man; he would not have had it in his power to do so much mischief if he had not been one; and Sismondi, who is not partial to the popes, attributes to him the character of an Italian patriot, which I am totally unable to discover in any part of his conduct. He says the same afterwards of another pope, a member of the same family as Sixtus, Julius the Second; and I confess to the same inability

Sixtus the
Fourth.

* I am not quite sure that I feel the same horror of Alexander that some people do. I doubt if he was really much worse than Julius the Second or Leo the Tenth.

again. To me it seems that the Della Roveres were as bad as the Borgias, and that they did a great deal more harm.*

It is rather a comfort to the reader of the history of the Italian Autumn to come to Pope Sixtus the Fourth : for he gives a little life to the scene. From the day of his accession to that of his death, he kept the peninsula in perpetual hot water. His main object—a very amiable one, doubtless—was to provide for his nephews ; and he proposed to attain his end by giving Church preferment to those of them who were ecclesiastics, and getting principalities for those who were laymen. The first were easily accommodated : the others were not ; and Sixtus turned all Italy inside out to get what he wanted for them. In his efforts to do so, he found himself constantly thwarted by the influence of the Medici, not Piero, for he was dead, but his sons Lorenzo and Giuliano, who had been allowed to succeed to his position, and in whose name, till they were old enough to take it up themselves, the government had been carried on by the chief men of the party. He determined to get rid of this difficulty, if by any possibility he could do so ; and as he was by no means scrupulous about the means he used, he arranged to try—first, assassination, and then, if that should fail, war—and war on a grand scale. Everybody knows about the Pazzi conspiracy, and how it went off ; how the Medici were to have been stabbed in the cathedral on Easter-Sunday at the elevation of the host ; how Giuliano *was* stabbed, and Lorenzo escaped ; how the conspirators tried to raise the people of the city, and how the people would not be raised ; how they were seized and put to death ; how some of them, including the Archbishop of Florence, were hung from the windows of the Palazzo Vecchio ; and how the result on the whole

His efforts
to establish
his nephews.

Pazzi con-
spiracy.

* After criticising the popes so severely, it is right to say that the other sovereigns of Europe were not much better. It would have been difficult to find among his contemporaries as good a man as Pius the Fifth.

League
against Flo-
rence.

was to strengthen the government of Lorenzo. So the first plan having been defeated, Sixtus tried the other. This seemed more likely to be successful. His activity enabled him to get together a considerable army, which was joined by that of the King of Naples, whose co-operation he had secured by a proposal to go shares in the spoil; and he succeeded in depriving Lorenzo of the services of his only ally, the Duchess-regent of Milan, by the patriotic device of calling the Swiss into Italy against her, and teaching those ruffians (for at this period the Swiss were little better) the road to the rich plains of Lombardy, which they did not soon forget. Florence had not the force to oppose to this formidable coalition, and it would have gone hard with her if Lorenzo had not taken the daring step of going in person to the Neapolitan court, and placing himself in the power of Ferdinand. As the latter had neither generosity, mercy, nor good faith, it was a bold venture on Lorenzo's part—but it was a successful one. Ferdinand was tired of the war, and was terribly nervous lest his enemy should call in the Angevins; and when he had made up his mind to grant, or at least to sell, terms of peace, he was not the least hampered by any scruples about throwing over his ally. Sixtus found at last that all the subtlety with which he had planned, and all the crime which he had so unsparingly used to effect, the overthrow of the Medici, had been completely wasted, and that if he wanted to aggrandise his nephews, he must do so in some other way.

War of Fer-
rara.

Another way appeared, as he thought, in the year 1482, when there seemed an opportunity of despoiling the house of Este of Ferrara. It will be recollected that the first important attempt which the Venetians had made to get a footing on the mainland, had been with reference to this very Ferrara; and as he thought it likely that they might still have a hankering after it, he proposed to them to make

a league with him, with the object, first, of conquering, and afterwards of dividing, the dominions of that state. The Venetians had no objection; but the other three powers had a great deal of objection; and they resolved to oppose it, if necessary, by force. Sixtus saw that he was not likely to succeed in his present object, and it occurred to him that he might make a still better thing of it by giving Ferrara up, changing sides and joining the confederacy, and by its help providing for his nephew (it was one particular nephew whom he was providing for on this occasion) at the expense of his allies. His readiness in coming to this decision did him some credit; but his new plan was quite hopeless. The Venetians were remarkable for the tenacity with which they clung to their possessions; and the Italian princes of that day were remarkable for the want of tenacity with which they clung to their alliances. The former were not the least appalled by the "Quadruple Alliance" formed against them; they had faced mightier coalitions before, and were destined to face mightier coalitions in the future; and they stood their ground. There were bloodless battles won and lost on both sides, but it was evident enough how it would end. The Milanese regency wanted to be out of it—to continue the war would do them no good; and besides, I rather fancy the Venetians had beaten their army very soundly; so they settled matters with the Signory. The defection of the Sforzas broke up the confederacy. The Venetians got peace, and, if I am not mistaken, the Polesina of Rovigo to boot; and poor Sixtus was so cut up at the failure of all his schemes, that it brought on a bad fit of the gout, which put an end to his life. There is a picture of him in the Vatican, by Melozzo of Forli, in which he is represented sitting in full conclave, receiving a deputation, or something of that sort. He has a full, but not bloated face, rather sensual: but, if I remember rightly, I do not think it would lead one to believe him to be a

very bad man, as I am afraid he was. His successor was Innocent the Eighth, who was to Sixtus what Galeazzo Sforza had been to Gian Galeazzo Visconti; and when he died he was followed by Alexander the Sixth.

Venice.

I have kept the Venetians for the last. What I can say about them may be expressed in few words; but those few words will be important. Amid the scene of chaos we have been looking on, one leading fact appears to give a tone to the history; and that fact is the growth of this power. While the other powers are all losing ground both in strength and in character, this one stands firm, resolute, inscrutable, secure from disturbance at home, and fearless of danger from abroad. Her great doge, Francesco Foscari, has long since passed away, leaving behind him a dark stain on the memory of the republic whose ingratitude and cruelty brought him to his grave. Among his successors he has no equal, perhaps none that are not far his inferiors; but Venice does not feel his loss: her counsels are still animated by the same spirit, still guided by the same ability; and there is still in her heart and in her eyes the same lust for empire. During sixteen years of this section, from 1463 to 1479, she is unable to pursue the career which she has chosen for herself; for she is engaged in a bloody and terrible war with the Turks, from which at length she emerges with the halo of great deeds and the marks of grievous sufferings, having lost some bright jewels of her Eastern crown, but having more than replaced them by the acquisition of the great kingdom of Cyprus. But after 1479 she turns to Italy again. I have said before that her course, in choosing the path of Italian aggrandisement, was not for the best; but its full dangers are as yet concealed from her. There is an old parable which, in the form of two curious mosaic pictures, had long since been imprinted on the pavement of St Mark's. In one is seen the figure of a lion, sleek and well-fed in appearance, floating on the

sea ; in the other, the same creature on land, lean, gaunt, and hungry, clutching the soil with his claws, glaring with his eyes half out of his skull, and gnashing his teeth.* The moral of this pictorial apologue is obvious enough. Perhaps the Venetians of that day thought that their mainland conquests on the one hand, and the loss of Scutari and Negropont on the other, showed that the old mosaicist was mistaken ; and that, at any rate, if the lion *was* half starved, there was plenty of food for him in Italy, and that the number of those who could resist such teeth and claws as he showed was daily diminishing. Venice was so clearly becoming the strongest power in Italy, that one is not surprised at her wishing to take advantage of it.

It seemed at this moment as if Italy had gone through all the phases of political life which belong to the period when a nation is forming itself, and that the time had arrived for completing the process by achieving unity. Other nations were doing so. England, though she made no external additions to the possessions of the Crown, had been rendered malleable by the Wars of the Roses, and she was being welded into a more compact state by Henry the Seventh. In France the great fiefs had been one after the other sucked into the dominions of the monarchy, by conquest, by escheat, or by marriage ; and Louis the Eleventh was effecting in the latter country what Henry the Seventh was effecting in the former. The union of Ferdinand and Isabella had joined the crowns of Castile and Aragon, and the conquest of Granada, made by their combined forces, had transformed them into the kingdom of Spain. All the nations of Western Europe were undergoing the same process of becoming not only peoples, but also states ; and it seemed right that the Ital-

Period for
completing
Italian
unity.

* I fancy this is an old mosaic, partly from a notion that I have been told so, and partly from the idea appearing to savour more of ancient than of modern times. I must say, however, that it does not seem very old in style. Probably it has been restored, and perhaps more than once.

Probabilities of such an event.

ians, who were the most advanced and polished of all, should, if they could not be first, at least not be last, in attaining this great point in the career of civilisation. And it seemed not impossible that such should be the case. It may seem a strange thing to say so ; but it rests upon the showing of history, that the tendency towards national union was stronger and more marked in Italy than anywhere else in Europe. No European nation had started from being such a mass of fragments ; in no European nation had the process of fusing those fragments together commenced at so late a period ; in no European nation had that process been assisted by so few accidental causes ; in no European nation had it been hindered by so many and such strong causes of disunion ; and in no nation had its action been so rapid. I am bound to show reason for what I say, and I will try to do so.

Italian tendencies to unity compared with those of the rest of Europe.

With regard to the first two of my statements, it is enough to refer to a historical atlas, and compare the successive maps of Italy with those of any other country—I will not say England, which has borne pretty nearly the same appearance from the days of Egbert to the present day—the conquest of Wales, and the union with Scotland, having not been the fusion of provinces into one system, so much as the addition of what might almost be called distinct countries,—but France, Spain, and Germany. It will be very evident not only that in all these countries the centripetal force had begun to act before it had touched Italy, but also that, even at the time of their greatest dismemberment, none of them had ever been broken so completely to pieces as she had. To have commenced the progress of union early, might have counterbalanced the drawback of having originally been divided into small fragments ; but in the case of Italy both these disadvantages were united. Other countries had the facilities for combination which are afforded by the accidents of mon-

archy. Germany had a centre in the person of a sovereign, with all a sovereign's advantages for drawing to himself first reverence and then power, and all a suzerain's chances of profiting by escheatals ; and that these causes did not produce in Germany their natural effects, was probably in great measure owing to the fact, that her king was also King of Italy and Emperor of Rome. Spain had the possibility of having her different principalities brought together by female succession and royal intermarriage. France had both. Italy, not having a monarch, for the dominion of the Emperors was either a nonentity or a disturbance, and never anything else, and not allowing the right of women to inherit,* had neither. Further, Italy had elements of disunion which existed nowhere else. Northern Italy was divided not only by the natural jealousies of neighbours, but by the conflict of opposite principles ; first the strife which, under the names of Guelf and Ghibelline, was waged between the partisans of the Church and the partisans of the Empire, and afterwards by that which, under the same names, was waged between the republics and the tyrants. And even had Northern Italy been one, it was thoroughly different from Southern Italy—even more different, I think, than Languedoc had been from Northern France ; while between these two sections, as opposed to each other in all those matters which are at all dependent on Government as the Greeks had been to the Macedonians, or the Swiss to the Austrians—there lay a Power, the influence of which was forcibly and successfully exerted in the opposite direction from that in which that of the central power in other countries has almost invariably tended ; for

* I do not *know* that this was a law in the peninsula ; but I am not aware of any instance of a *fair* case of female succession in Northern Italy. Sforza's seizure of Milan was notoriously illegal ; and though the French kings, when they claimed the duchy of Milan, and the popes when they married their relatives to the daughters of the princes of Central Italy, put this claim forward, yet they did so with the consciousness of being supported by overwhelming force.

the interest of kings has been to unite their vassals, and that of the popes has been to disunite their neighbours. Thus, then, with all these hindrances to union,—originally broken into lesser fragments than her neighbours—starting later than they did on the career of fusing them together—without a national sovereign to act as a centripetal force to draw in her different states, and with no chance of the lucky accidents of escheatals of provinces or marriages of heiresses—with Northern Italy divided by a long war of principles—with Southern Italy more different from Northern than the upholders of those principles were from one another—and with the Pope situated most advantageously between the two, doing his best to prevent their coming together, and assiduously stirring up the cauldron whenever there seemed a chance of its settling—it would have been little less than a miracle if Italy had become united as soon as her neighbours. And yet it was astonishing how nearly she did it. When people talk of Italian unity being unattainable, and give as a reason for their opinion the fact that it never has been attained, I think that they do not give sufficient weight to these considerations, nor to the further one, perhaps the most important of all, that in no other European country had the work of union, so far as it was accomplished, been so much the work of the people themselves as it was in Italy. The Lombard cities, as they were drawn one after another under the dominion of Venice, became strongly attached to their new government, and identified their interests with those of St Mark; and two of the most brilliant defences in history have been that of Brescia against the Milanese in 1433, and that of Padua in 1509 against the forces of the League of Cambray, both of them the work fully as much of the citizens as of the Venetian soldiers. It was not till long after their respective annexations that such a feeling would have been shown by the Normans, the Poitevins, the Languedocians, or the

Bretons towards the French, the Aragonese towards the Castilians, or the Scotch towards the English.

Had Italy been allowed to go on as she was going, I think that in thirty or forty years she would have presented some such aspect as this : 1. A Venetian state, comprising what was lately known as the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom of Austria (the duchy of Milan extended a good deal farther west, but probably the house of Savoy would have contrived to secure some of it at the time of its overthrow), and also the Swiss canton of Tessin, the duchy of Parma, the Legations and the March of Ancona—or, in other words, the whole of the Papal States east of the Apennines, from the Austrian to the Neapolitan frontier,—and possibly Genoa and the Genoese coast up to the borders of Nice. The Gonzaga dominion of Mantua, and the Este dominions of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio, would have been what the French call *enclavées* within this realm, waiting till it should please the Signory to absorb them. 2. A duchy of Savoy answering to the mainland possessions of the kings of Sardinia, either before the French Revolution or after the Congress of Vienna, according to whether Genoa (which probably would not have remained independent) belonged to it or to Venice, and with a much larger dominion on the French side of the Alps than they had. 3. A Florentine state, consisting of Tuscany, with Massa and Carrara. 4. An ecclesiastical state, covering all the ground between Tuscany, Naples, the Apennines, and the Tuscan Sea, with the exception of what was occupied by the duchy of Urbino. 5. The kingdom of Naples. Had this arrangement of provinces taken place, it is clear that the process must have gone further. The “balance of power” would have been disturbed, and that in a way to leave the largest share of territory in the hands of the ablest, the richest, the most persevering, and not the least ambitious of all ; and if, at this juncture, the throne of Naples had been occu-

Probable results of Italy being left to herself.

pied by a prince possessed of the temper and talents of Ladislaus, and of greater tenacity of life, the map of Italy would have been still further simplified by the occupation of Rome, and the great powers of the north and of the south would have met on the battle-ground of Tuscany. The result of this collision would have depended much on the Florentines. Had they re-established their republic, as, looking at their history at the beginning of the 16th century, we are entitled to say they were very likely to do, they might have held their own between the two contending parties, as the house of Savoy did between France and Austria; but they would have held it by the precarious tenure of wisdom on the part of their rulers, and with the feeling, that an instant's relaxation of watchfulness in high places might entail the ruin of their commonwealth. But if the Medici had continued or recovered their supremacy, and had exercised it in the spirit in which the Medici of the Cinquecento actually did exercise it, then, I think, they must have fallen. The Venetians and the Neapolitans would have broken in: Pisa* and Lucca would have succumbed to the former, Siena would have fallen to the latter; and, though one can hardly bring one's self to believe that Florence herself would have been subjugated by either, yet she would have dragged on a wretched existence, only allowed to subsist by the jealousy of her neighbours, and almost totally devoid of influence. Had this been the case, it would have remained for Venice and Naples to fight it out: the banners of the southern power would have been gradually pushed back and back, till they had receded to the original frontier of the kingdom; and Venice, though her dominions would be somewhat curtailed by the occa-

* Pisa, in her revolt at the end of the fifteenth century, actually did offer her signory to the Venetians, as the price of protecting her against her hated oppressors of Florence. Venice did not accept it; but if she had contrived to push her possessions so near as I am supposing, I hardly think she would have been so self-denying.

sional necessity of buying the alliance, or at least the neutrality, of the "irrepressible" house of Savoy, by concessions of territory, would have been paramount in the north and in the centre of the peninsula. She would probably have found out, that it was desirable to introduce some modifications into her constitution, which, though probably retaining a strong aristocratic tinge, would have ceased to be an oligarchy; and she would have allowed her subjects to retain a good deal of municipal independence. Further than this I dare not go. I have perhaps gone too far already, and may have imagined a tissue of impossibilities; but I will not venture to speculate on the union of northern and southern Italy under any other dominion than that which has actually effected it. Naples could not have conquered Venice, and it is not easy to see how Venice could have governed Naples. It is true that the Venetian aristocracy contrived to inspire its subjects with something of the loyal affection which is paid to monarchs; but I very much doubt if this would have been possible in southern Italy. Had Venice been a monarchy, she might have done it; but if she had been, she would have ceased to be Venice.

I have arrived, therefore, not at Italian unity, but at something approaching to a North-Italian unity under the government of Venice, as a probable result of the course in which the history of the peninsula was tending; but it seems that justice would hardly have been satisfied with such a consummation as this. The first act in Venice's career of mainland conquest, that from which all the rest of it had sprung, had been an atrocious crime, and one for which it is difficult to find the slightest palliation. That crime had not only been completely unpunished, but had apparently been rewarded by success, which, though not unchecked, had been on the whole pretty constant; she had won a large extent of territory, and a larger extent of prestige: she had attained the foremost place among the

Predominance of Venice.

powers of the peninsula ; and she had contrived to inspire the Italians generally with an almost superstitious veneration for her wisdom and her fortune. It would hardly have been right, that the spoliation and murder of the Carraras should lead to the perpetrators of the deed being invested in consequence of it with the dominion of northern Italy ; and yet it seemed that there was no power in the peninsula capable of preventing it. And truly this was the case. If Venice was to be excluded from the Italian crown, the crown of Alboin, those who were to arrest her must be summoned from beyond the Alps. But that method, if resorted to, was certain to be effectual. The nations of western Europe had been beforehand with Italy in the race of unity : in eastern Europe there had grown up, not a united nation, but a powerful empire, in the hands of the Hapsburgs of Austria : France, Spain, and Germany had gained an advantage over Italy ; and cruelly did they use it.

4th subdivision : irruption of the foreigners.

Overthrow of Naples.

I shall not give any details as to the fearful storms amidst which the Italian Autumn closed. The story would be long, and it is one from which I am disposed to turn away. The horrors of the time, horrors which lasted for nearly half a century, have been sketched in Macaulay's 'Machiavelli,' in words to which it is impossible to add anything, and I with difficulty resist the temptation of copying them out. Then were seen the weakness of the Italian powers, the faults of the Italian military system, the miseries of Italian disunion. Called in by the short-sighted policy of the Sforzas of Milan, the King of France, the inheritor of the pretensions of the house of Anjou, crossed the Alps in search of the crown of Naples ; and the dance of death began. Naples went down at the first shock of the onset of France : she was lifted from the ground by the aid of Spain, who could not endure a rival so near her Sicilian kingdom : for a short time she staggered on, lean-

ing on the support of that dangerous protector ; and then came the inevitable doom. Again France and Aragon meet in the shock of war upon her soil : but this time the strife is not between the ally of Naples and her enemy, but between the members of a brotherhood of rapine, fighting for the exclusive possession of the spoil which they had covenanted to divide ; and when at last the smoke of the conflict passes off, Naples emerges no longer as an independent kingdom, but as a province of the crown of Spain. Nor was the despotism of the North more fortunate than the despotism of the South. The same king of France who led the second onset on Naples claimed the duchy of Milan through an ancestress of Visconti blood, and before proceeding to the South, stopped to secure this as a preliminary. Like the King of Naples, the Duke of Milan relied on foreign aid ; and his fate was the same. The Swiss soldiers of Lodovico not only refused to defend him, but actually delivered him up to the French, receiving their payment, not, like king Ferdinand, in territory, but in hard cash. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, two of the powers of Italy were in the hands of foreigners.

And of
Milan.

The Pope pointed out to the despoilers their next victim. The inroads of the foreigners, which had produced such a lamentable effect on the fortunes of the other governments of Italy, had told strongly in favour of those of the Court of Rome. To the Italians, the Pope was little more than a sovereign, like the Duke of Milan or anybody else, and as a sovereign, neither the most powerful nor the most respectable of them. That he was Head of the Church they admitted ; but I do not think that they thought any more of him on that account, or that they expected him to be a bit more scrupulous in his policy or more saintly in his life than his neighbours were ; and though, whenever his Holiness went to war, he excommunicated his antagonist, that got to be regarded as a mere matter of form, and, as Ingolds-

Altered po-
sition of the
Popes.

by says, "nobody seemed one penny the worse" for it. But when the French, Spaniards, Germans, and Swiss appeared, it was another affair. The northern nations (the Spaniards included*), much as they differed from each other, agreed in being more religious in their tone of thought than the Italians were. I have said something to account for this difference in the case of the Germans; and I think almost stronger reason might be found to account for it in the cases of the Spaniards and the French. They had, besides, the inestimable advantage for their faith of not being brought into such close contact with the Papacy at its headquarters as the Italians were, and of thereby acquiring the feeling towards it which familiarity is popularly supposed to engender. So that they still entertained somewhat of the respect for the Head of the Church, which had been felt by their ancestors long ago, evinced great dread of his displeasure, and showed him marks of deference to which he had long been unused. The popes determined to make use of this feeling for their own purposes in increasing their temporal dominions; and the pope who did this on the grandest scale, was the successor of Alexander the Sixth. This was Julius the Second, the second of the family of La Rovere, the pope to whom Sismondi has given credit for Italian patriotism.

Cæsar Bor-
gia.

During the time of his predecessor, a considerable dominion had been erected in Central Italy by the famous Cæsar Borgia. The means by which he did so were most iniquitous; but after he had done it, he governed it like a statesman, and became the most popular, as he certainly was the ablest, ruler of his time. It is difficult to resist a wish that this sovereignty of his had been a little more durable; for, certainly, if any man living could

* Of course Spain was not a "northern" nation, even as contrasted with Italy; but to bracket her under that title with France and Germany is less absurd, I think, than the way people now speak of the "northern powers," meaning Russia, Prussia, and Austria as opposed to England and France.

have saved Italy from the fate which was coming upon her, he was that man; and I rather wonder that amidst the numerous rehabilitations which are the fashion at present, no one has tried his hand at him.* I should have thought that his was just the character which a certain school of writers would fall in love with, and an infinitely more attractive one than a good many of the whitewashed gentlemen who have been of late presented to our notice. His death destroyed all the chances of salvation which his country might have looked for from him; and his dominions incontinently fell to pieces. There was a general scramble for the spoil; and in the *mêlée*, the greater share fell to the Republic of Venice.

That this was the best fate that could have befallen them, both for themselves and for Italy, there can, I think, be no doubt. For themselves, because the Venetian government was the best in the peninsula, and therefore most likely to make them happy, and also the strongest, and therefore the most capable of defending them against the foreigners; and for Italy, because Venice was the only anchor left to hold on by, and whatever strengthened her strengthened Italy also. Nor can we see what objection the Pope (who was their suzerain) could reasonably have had to the arrangement. They had sometimes, it is true, been under the direct government of the Popes, but I don't think that they had been so since the days of the Florentine "Army of Liberty." They had almost always been under tyrants of their own, the Malatestas, Manfredi, and others; and of late the popes had taken to giving this system the strongest of all possible sanctions, by going through fire and water

The Venetians in Romagna.

* I am rather speaking in the dark here. There have been some slight attempts to scrape a little of the black off him. Roscoe, among others, is, if I do not mistake, rather kind to him. But I fancy that the defence seldom goes much further than saying that his government was better than that of the princes whom he dispossessed. I am, however, as I say, speaking rather in the dark.

for the sake of getting them, as independent principalities, into the possession of their own relatives. Nay, the Venetians themselves had been for some half-century masters of two cities in that region, those of Ravenna and Cervia; and I am not aware that any of the numerous Popes who had reigned since they had acquired them had raised the smallest objection to their having done so; so that there need have been no difficulty on the ground of principle in allowing them to retain their new acquisitions; and even if there *had* been any difficulty, one would have thought that if ever a point could be strained for the sake of a great public benefit, this was a case for doing so. But not so did it appear to Julius. He could think of nothing but his desire of petty territorial aggrandisement for himself and his See; and in order that he might be the direct sovereign of certain small provinces of which his predecessors had been content to be suzerains, he turned all Europe upside down. From the selfish ambition of Julius sprang all the devastation and carnage of wellnigh a quarter of a century, the sack of Rome by Bourbon's plunderers, the destruction by pestilence of Lautrec's army before Naples, the ruin of Florence, the blood shed in a hundred fields of slaughter—of Agnadello and Ravenna, of Marignano and Pavia, of the Spurs and Flodden; in short, of all the miseries which Europe suffered, and all the tears which Europe shed, till the day when the work was completed by the pacification between Charles the Fifth and Francis the First on the basis of the subjugation and slavery of Italy.

Quarrel
with Julius
the Second.

The Venetians had no wish to deny the Pope's claim as lord paramount of Romagna; and as soon as they had taken possession of their share of Cæsar Borgia's dominions, they offered to do homage for them, and hold them on the same terms as their predecessors had done. But nothing would serve Julius but to hold them under his immediate rule, and he sent peremptory orders to the Signory to sur-

render them at once. The Venetians refused. Then the Pope, resolved at all hazards to have his way, sought for allies on every hand to assist him in doing so. He applied for support in every quarter—even distant England was invited to join in this holy war. He worked every bad passion that could enlist the princes of Europe on his side—envy, cupidity, vindictiveness. The contented state of the Venetian provinces, the fulness of the Venetian treasury, were a standing insult to sovereigns with their half-famished and overtaxed subjects and embarrassed finances. The rich domains of the Venetian state might be as ample a reward to the defenders of Holy Church as those of the Counts of Toulouse and Viscounts of Béziers had been three centuries before. And surely it was impossible for Louis of France to forget that the banners of St Mark floated upon the walls of several fair cities which of right belonged to his duchy of Milan; or for Maximilian of Austria to forgive the recent defeat of his army at Cadauro and the subsequent capture of Trieste. These arguments fell upon ears only too well prepared to receive them—in fact, but few arguments were needed to induce the princes of Europe of that day to join in a league of plunder; the only thing that it was difficult to do was to make them adhere afterwards to their arrangements for the distribution of the spoil.

A league was formed to despoil the Venetians of the whole of their Italian provinces on a scale hitherto quite unknown, and never again matched in Europe till the days of the Seven Years' War. The Pope was at its head, and after him were ranged the names of almost every sovereign in Europe. There was Maximilian, Emperor of Rome and King of Germany by election, Duke of Austria and half-a-dozen other territories by inheritance, and Lord of Burgundy, Alsace, and the Netherlands by marriage; there was Louis the "Father of his People," King of France, Duke of Milan, and Lord of Genoa; there was Ferdinand the Catholic,

League of
Cambray.

King of Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, and Naples; there were the Duke of Savoy, the Duke of Ferrara, and the Marquis of Mantua; and finally there were the Swiss. It almost takes one's breath away to read this list of names; and when one recollects that in the fourteenth century Venice had only just been a match for Genoa, and that in the fifteenth century she had only just been a match for Milan, one cannot help wondering that she dared to face a confederacy in which both those states, united together, formed but a small part of the dominions of only one of its members, and perhaps not the most powerful of them.

Venice had just got rid of the burden of a second Turkish war, which had cost her some more of her eastern possessions, and had to a certain extent weakened her. The moment might have seemed a favourable one for making an impression on her rulers, and Julius wished to make the most of it. He sent for the Venetian envoy at his court, informed him of what was on foot, and then had the effrontery to propose that if the Signory would save him the trouble of attacking them, by giving up to him all that he wanted without striking a blow, he would retire from the confederacy, and do his best to defraud his allies — or, as perhaps I should call them, his *pals* — of what he had promised to help them to get. The Signory, however, declined to enter into this creditable little arrangement, and Julius took his measures accordingly. He launched out a bull of excommunication in the real slashing Vatican style, and gave the signal for war.

Battle of
Agnadello.

The Venetians faced the appalling tempest which had broken upon them as Venetians knew how to do. But trials came fast upon them. They sent a sufficient army into the field; but, unfortunately, they placed it under two commanders who disagreed with each other; and an action coming on, one of them neglected to support his colleague, and allowed half the Venetian army to support, unassisted,

the attack of the whole mass of the French. The result was what might have been expected. The Venetians fought like lions, and displayed a courage which reflected lustre on the somewhat waning credit of the Italian arms; but the odds were too great, and their heroism only served to prolong the slaughter. This battle of Agnadello was decisive. The Venetians could not at once replace the forces they had lost, and before they had had time to do so the whole of their mainland provinces had been overrun, the French armies pushed up to the edge of the Lagoons, and the booming of their cannon heard within the city itself. The other enemies of Venice, encouraged by the success of their allies, entered upon the track which the French had cleared—the Germans on the north, the Papalists, Ferrarese, and Mantuans on the south; and it seemed as if every vestige of the dominion of St Mark was about to be swept from the fields of Italy.

It was on such an occasion as this that the greatness of Venice was displayed in its full glory. There is much in her prosperity to repel us: we admire her sagacity, her firmness of purpose, and her success; but her actions and character are often hateful. One cannot repress indignation at the cold-blooded atrocity of the deeds by which she paves her way to empire; the unjust aggressions, the flagrant treasons, the remorseless executions, the ingratitude with which she requites the services of her noblest children, the abominable statutes of the Inquisition of State. But to see her in a time of darkness and peril, like that which followed on the battle of Agnadello, is enough to make one forget all her crimes. One can no more think of Francesco da Carrara or Francesco Foscari at the time of the League of Cambray, than of the seizure of Silesia at the time of the Seven Years' War, or of the evils of slavery at the time of Antietam and Chancellorsville. The qualities which had made Venice odious in the day of her strength, invest her with

Resolution
of the Venetians.

grandeur and nobleness in the day of her weakness ; and as all the bloodhounds of Europe, with ravenous jaws agape for their prey, are rushing down upon all sides to tear her to pieces, we can imagine her standing, in stately beauty, in the midst of them, pale but collected, and resolved to be steadfast to the end—worthy to have worn the Italian crown, which at one time fate seemed to have in store for her ; worthy to reign, because able to endure.

I have said too much about the League of Cambray already ; and if I were to go on with the story of the defence which the Venetians made, with any degree of fullness, I do not think I should ever come to end. The Transalpines, who had formed their ideas of Italian courage from the ease with which Milan and Naples had been overthrown, had now occasion to find out that they were mistaken. With politic generosity, Venice, knowing that she could not hope to be able to protect her mainland subjects efficiently, and that to attempt to do so would only expose them to the irritated vengeance of the enemy, released them from all oaths of allegiance to herself, and authorised them to make the best terms they could ; and the gratitude which this inspired was strengthened by feelings of regret for her rule, which arose after they had had the advantage of comparing it with that of the foreigners. Before long, this

Treviso and
Padua de-
clare against
the Ger-
mans.

feeling found expression in action. The city of Treviso, which had not at first been occupied, seeing the fate which its neighbours had brought on themselves by submission, took courage to resist, shut its gates in the face of those who came to take possession, and hoisted the banner of St Mark. Encouraged by this example, and maddened by suffering, Padua rose in revolt, drove out the German garrison which held the place for the Emperor, and declared for the Republic ; and the Signory, animated by reviving hopes, determined that the loyal devotion of these two gallant cities should meet with a worthy response,

welcomed their return to their allegiance, and undertook their defence. They undertook no light task. Maximilian, furious that his prey should escape from his grasp, and that his rebels should be encouraged by people whom he considered as thoroughly beaten under his feet, made strenuous efforts to recover his losses, and called upon all the allies to assist him in doing so. The allies obeyed his summons. Not one of the confederates of Cambray but sent a contingent to the host, which, under the Emperor's command, beleaguered Padua; and their combined forces were swelled to a total which seems large even to us—the contemporaries of Solferino and Fredericksburg—and which, in the eyes of the Italians, must have appeared almost fabulous. But the Venetians and Paduans did not quail. The latter knew well enough what would happen to them if the enemy once got in, and that everything they held most dear was at stake in the game that was being played beneath their walls; and in the former there appears to have arisen a sort of chivalrous delight in the war, a pleasurable excitement from the greatness of the danger, and the multitude of their enemies. The young nobility of Venice crowded to take part in the defence, as their descendants in this century did to take part in the defence of Rome; and foremost among them was the son of the Doge, the noble old man of whose monument I spoke some pages back. When such a spirit animated the defenders, they were invincible; and though there was no lack of valour or energy on the part of the besiegers, and though the different nations of which their force was composed were inspired with more than usual zeal, by the consciousness that they fought under each other's eyes, and by the desire each felt to surpass the rest, yet they were unable to prevail. At length, in despair, Maximilian raised the siege.

Siege of
Padua.

The abandonment of the attack on Padua was the signal for the turning of the tide. The confederacy of Cambray

Break-up of
the League
of Cambray.

fell to pieces ; and within a few months the Venetians had the pleasure of seeing their enemies flying at each other's throats. The first in the race of treachery was the original plotter of the league, the Pope. The Venetians, finding that they would be forced to make *some* sacrifices, and finding that their possessions in Romagna were those that could most conveniently be spared, made up their minds to surrender them to him, in order to induce him to change sides in the war. Julius, having got all he wanted from them, determined to try if he could not tear Parma and Piacenza from the duchy of Milan, by committing a second treason as flagrant as the first, deserted the league, absolved the Republic, and in conjunction with her, with the Swiss, and with the Kings of Spain and England, made a violent attack upon the dominions of the King of France. Then followed war upon war, of which it is difficult to form any idea beyond that of a general sea of blood and carnage, the actors in them changing sides with a rapidity which produced effects like those of a constantly-shaken kaleidoscope. Alliances were formed, broken up, and organised again *across* the old lines, with a disregard of engagements worthy of Quattrocento Italy ; and blood was poured forth on the field of battle and in military massacres with a carelessness of human life surpassing the worst parts of the wars of Napoleon. Amidst these contending hordes of plunderers, animated by a desire of spoil even more than by mutual hatred, Italy was crushed ; and from the midst of the unhappy land there arose one wail of agony, one wild cry for deliverance from the unutterable outrage and desolation which ushered in the long dominion of the foreigner. But the cry arose in vain. But one power existed on the peninsula which could have sheltered Italy from her doom, and that power had been disabled by the Pope. Venice,

Venice seriously weakened by the effects of it.

though her courage had saved her from destruction, had been checked in her career of advance, and driven back

upon herself: some of her mainland estates had been torn away, and the remainder cruelly devastated by successive invaders: her finances were crippled by an overwhelming debt; and surrounded by the dominion of powers far mightier than herself, she begins to feel conscious that the sun of her glory has passed its zenith, and that her decline is coming on. The wars which, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, she wages in the East against the Turks, abound in deeds of heroism rarely matched in history, and have illustrated her later annals with many glorious names; but she ceases to have a guiding influence on the fate of the people from whose blood she sprang, and whose language she speaks. The League of Cambray was her Meloria.

But the work of the Popes would not have been complete if they had been content with crippling Venice. If Venice, by her politic brain and resolute spirit, could have achieved anything towards protecting her countrymen from being trodden under foot by the barbarians, and thereby promoting their material welfare, a service of a yet higher kind might have been rendered by Florence. We have seen that, during the fifteenth century, Florence grew forgetful of her ancient spirit, and, becoming careless of freedom, acquiesced contentedly in the rule, or at least predominance, of the family of Medici. But at the first appearance of foreign invasion she wakes from her torpor. The Medici, who had endeavoured to purchase the forbearance of the King of France by surrendering into his hands the fortresses of the Tuscan frontier, were told plainly enough that their power had come to an end, and, though not punished in any other way for a weakness which amounted to treason, were forced to leave the city. The republican government was restored; the French were taught that they were not to be allowed to ride rough-shod over the liberties of a free people, and tamed down to at

Expulsion
of the Me-
dici, and
restoration
of the Re-
public.

War and
conquest of
Pisa.

least a decent show of civility ; * and though at first the establishment of liberty was attended with struggles between the partisans of the visionary enthusiast Savonarola, and an aristocratical faction wishing to establish their own authority, yet things settled down at last into something like good order, and Florence possessed a better government than, I think, she had ever had before. It was dangerous to play at faction at such a time, for the only hope of preserving national independence lay in preserving internal union, and internal union implied mutual confidence and general content. One thing there was which mars the satisfaction with which we contemplate this happy restoration. Pisa, ever since her fall at the commencement of the fifteenth century, had chafed at the loss of her independence, and had taken advantage of the passage of Charles the Eighth and his army to recover it ; and the new government considered itself bound in honour to destroy it again. It is difficult not to believe that it would have been well for the Florentines if, following the precedent of their ancestors of a century and a half before,† they had recognised the republic of Pisa, and tried to obtain from her as an ally a support which they could never hope to obtain from her as a subject ; but they would not. The decline which had come upon Pisa ever since Meloria, had since her conquest by Florence at the beginning of the fifteenth century, become absolute political death ! Her trade languished, her manufactures came to an end, her fields were left uncultivated, her territory became depopulated, the very air became pestilential — nothing was left to her children but their

* I need hardly recall the well-known story of Pietro Capponi's answer to Charles the Eighth. The Capponi, as a family, possessed in an eminent degree the character of civic virtue. It never shone more brightly than in these latter days of the Florentine republic ; and one is happy to say that it exists among them still.

† When they permitted their subjects to recover their independence, after their own revolt against the Duke of Athens.

swords ; but those swords they well knew how to use. It was impossible that they should be able to maintain themselves for ever against such fearful odds ; but they preserved their late-recovered liberty for ten years, fighting desperately, and making terrible sacrifices : and when, at last, they succumbed, they did so in the spirit in which Argante succumbed to Tancred. The Florentines, to do them justice, did everything in their power to mitigate the humiliation of their defeat ; but the Pisans refused to be mollified by any advances. The bravest of her youth sought for enrolment in foreign service. Her noblest families emigrated, preferring exile from the home of their ancestry to the pain of living there under the yoke of Florence ; and it is from the descendant of one of these families, the last of an ancient and heroic line, whose name, even in this short sketch, has appeared more than once, that has proceeded the great work which, perhaps more than any other, has kindled in the present century an interest in the past annals of despised and down-trodden Italy.

Pisa is an old friend of ours, and we have had reason to see so much of her, and been called upon to admire her so highly in her past days of greatness, that I feel not altogether unjustified in making a sort of digression to attend her to the last. Considering the fate that was befalling the rest of the country, it may seem a light thing in comparison that she should have been forced to admit the rule (and not an ungentle one, as times went) of those who came of the same blood and spoke the same language as herself. It is only when one looks back upon her past history, when one recollects how great and glorious she had been in her early days, what gallant deeds of arms, and what noble works of art had been produced by that local spirit of patriotism which in presence of the calamities of the time was becoming out of date, that one can spare any sympathy for her ; and yet I am not sure that a more

mournful interest does not attach to her end than to any contemporaneous event, even though one of those events was the bursting of the storm of Cambray. One cannot help feeling that had Florence pleased, there might have been formed a Tuscan federation of four free cities, of which she would have been the leader and directress, and which, allied with the republic of Genoa, which about this time was restored by Andrea Doria, might not perhaps have been able to recover freedom for Italy, but might, at any rate, have preserved a traditional recollection of the old Lombard League, and taught the brigands of the North and the West that there was at least one region of that peninsula, the wealth of which could not be ransacked without fiercer and more continuous exertions than they would probably have cared to make ; and one must feel indignant that, in order to regain a territory, the possession of which was to her rather a source of weakness than of strength, by crushing the resistance of a gallant people who only sought that freedom which she claimed for herself, she should have thrown that chance away.

And what was the fate of Florence herself ? In the year 1512 occurred a temporary lull in the storms which were devastating the peninsula. The combatants, exhausted by the losses which they had mutually inflicted, stopped to breathe ; and in the interval, the Spaniards—who had, on the whole, had the best of the strife, and who had earned the difficult reputation of being the most cruel, the most merciless, and the most insatiable of all the foreign nations whose bands were infesting Italy—determined to take advantage of it in order to pillage Florence. They demanded, for no reason whatever save their own good pleasure, that the government of that city should pay down a handsome sum to buy off their hostility ; and before the latter had time to intimate their acquiescence or refusal, tacked on an additional request that the Medici should be restored. The rea-

son for this was, that the Medici had given them to understand that if they were at the head of affairs they would be able to get much more money out of the people than the present republican government was likely to do ; and this argument was quite enough for the Spaniards. The Florentines declined to accede to this modest proposal. But the invaders were already on the march ; and almost at the same time as the citizens were favoured with this last *ultimatum*, they received the intelligence that Prato had been stormed and sacked with circumstances of revolting barbarity. One would have thought that the accounts of what had happened there would have been sufficient reason to unite all the Florentines in determined opposition to such an enemy ; but there were found among them persons base enough to court submission. An aristocratical party (not an aristocracy of the Albizzi type, but a mere clique of fine gentlemen) thought it would be a much finer thing to be satellites of a court than to be members of a vulgar republic ; and they conspired against their country. Profiting by the terror caused by the massacre of Prato, they revolted, seized the public palace, dismissed the republican magistracy, at whose personal escape they had the grace to connive, and opened their gates to the Spaniards. The rule of the Medici was restored, not, as of yore, on the footing of influence, but on the footing of a tyranny supported by the swords of foreigners. The chief of the usurpers (not the eldest of the family, but the ablest of them) was the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici ; and the Florentines soon had occasion to find out that though he was not always very scrupulous as to the fulfilment of his promises, he was most exact in the performance of his bargain with the Spanish soldiery. In the following year the death of Julius the Second created a vacancy in the Vatican which he was chosen to fill ; and Florence had the honour of being governed from Rome by the lieutenants of Leo the Tenth.

The Medici
brought
back to
Florence by
the Span-
iards.

Character of
Julius the
Second.

Julius the Second had been by no means a good pope. His claim to be considered as an Italian patriot amounts to this : that after having, for the sake of adding a few square miles to the domains governed directly by himself, called such a flood of foreigners into the country as had not yet been seen there, in order to enable him to cripple the only power from which Italy could have looked for deliverance ; and that, after having done this successfully, and got his wretched square miles, he spared his victims any further robbery, when all motive for robbing them had ceased, and kindly condescended to make use of their assistance to enable him to rob his own associates. In truth, his conduct towards the French was as bad as his conduct towards the Venetians, though less harm came of it. I do not fancy he has left a very unpopular memory behind him : but I think that is because of the personal courage which he showed in assuming the capacity of a trooper, along with that of Pope, as he very frequently did ; and he was so fond of gratifying his ends by deeds of violence, that people forgot that he had no sort of scruples about gaining them by deeds of treachery. He gets credit for having somewhat of the character of William of Deloraine, or Bertram Rishingam ; but neither the mosstrooper, nor the buccaneer, set up for a patriot, or would have condescended to desert his own friends. In another rank of life, Pope Julius might have been a burglar. The difficulty would have been, to have found a gang of burglars who would have admitted him into their fraternity.

And of Leo
the Tenth.

But if Julius was bad, Leo was worse. Julius's faults were not without a dignity of their own. There is something to admire in his personal courage—in the boldness with which he used to throw his excommunications about—in the way in which, at a very advanced age, he used to put his armour on and appear at the head of his troops—in his winter attack on Mirandola, and his entry into that

town by the breach made by his cannon. Leo was a different sort of man. He never committed his crimes in a passion, as Julius often did—he was always perfectly calm and collected about them ; and instead of using treachery when violence would not answer, he generally, of the two methods, chose treachery as a matter of preference. He was a great patron of art, as everybody knows, though it is doubted whether art gained very much by his patronage in the long run ; but he is one out of many instances to show that the well-known example in the Latin Grammar about the softening effect of the ingenuous arts, must be taken with considerable qualifications. I think that the difference between the two Popes may be gathered pretty well from Raphael's portraits of them. Julius looks a stern and merciless man, one who would order a general massacre or preach a crusade of extermination upon very slight provocation ; but there is a great air of nobleness about his head. Leo's is, I think, the most repelling countenance I know, and becomes more so the more you look at it. I suppose Raphael did his best to make him look attractive, and certainly no one was more capable of drawing out whatever was good in the face of his subject, but he could do nothing for Leo. Such a combination of cruelty, hard-heartedness, and well-fed sensuality, is not often to be met with so obviously displayed ; and an appropriate set-off to this character is afforded by the sly demure-looking rascal of a cardinal, who stands behind his chair. Macaulay might have thought of this picture in his description of client Marcus, in the 'Lays of Ancient Rome ;'

“Wheresoe'er such lord is found, such client still will be.”

Both Julius and Leo look as if they would sacrifice human life without compunction. But Julius would direct the slaughter himself, charge his victims at the head of his troops, and be rather pleased than not if they tried to de-

fend themselves. Leo might amuse himself while it went on by holding a philosophical conversation with literary men, or giving instructions for the decoration of the apartments of the Vatican. Julius might have ordered the massacre of Jaffa. Leo would have been at home at one of the suppers of Barére.

Leo breaks
up the set-
tlement of
Noyon.

So it was with their policy towards Italy: the selfishness of Julius was the selfishness of a Pope—that of Leo was the selfishness of a Medici. Julius called the barbarians into Italy, to enable him to extend the dominions of his See; Leo called them in to enable him to extend the dominions of his family. In 1516, a sort of peace was made at Noyon, between the powers of Europe, the Pope and the Venetians included; and perhaps that peace might have been permanent, if it had not been for Leo. But he wanted to get fresh *appanages* for his relatives, and thought he might do so if he could fish in troubled waters; and he devoted his most strenuous efforts to trouble them. He had little difficulty. Nothing was easier than to revive the French claims on Naples, or to get the Spaniards to try and restore the Sforzas to Milan; and soon the water was, as they say, in fine fishing order. But there were no means of checking the angry elements when once they had been aroused; and all the horrors of the wars that immediately followed upon the League of Cambray, were renewed in these fresh conflicts, and, if possible, exaggerated. Leo was fortunate in the time of his death; it occurred just at the moment at which the Spaniards, with whom, at that juncture, he happened to be in alliance, had driven the French out of Lombardy, and at which his troops, in conjunction with theirs, had made a triumphal entry into Milan. His fate was like Innocent the Fourth's. He was allowed to see the immediate success of his crimes, but was removed from the scene too soon to witness their ultimate punishment. The punishment, such as it was,

came in the days of his less able, but less guilty, nephew ; who, after a short interval, during which the papal crown was worn by a Fleming, Adrian the Fifth, was elected to reign under the title of Clement the Seventh.

The punishment was the sack of Rome by Bourbon's army. To the Pope himself it was not very heavy. He was, indeed, kept in a sort of way under duress by his conquerors ; but beyond the humiliation of being in fact, though not in name, a prisoner, it does not appear that he had much to endure. As generally happens in these cases, the sins of the rulers were vicariously expiated by their subjects. For more than nine months the capital of Christendom was under the absolute and entire control of a vast horde of robbers—probably the greatest set of ruffians who could have been got together, even at that day—and it is needless to dilate on what the inhabitants underwent at their hands. It is enough to say, that from the entry of Charles the Eighth into Italy in 1494, down to the final pacification of Cambray in 1529, none of the calamities of Italy had been so great as those caused by the occupation of Rome. In it were compressed and intensified all the horrors of that dreadful period.

The ruin of Rome was the liberation of Florence. As soon as the news arrived that their master, the chief among the Medici, was a prisoner, the people took advantage of the opportunity to cause his lieutenant to withdraw, and restored the republic. For three years it lasted ; and, being guided by the counsels of its worthiest citizens, gave promise of surviving to a happier day. But there was no security for it as long as a Medici was pope. Had Clement died at this juncture, there would have been no one left with such motive for being its enemy, and such power to do it hurt ; and it is likely that, in the religious wars which almost immediately afterwards began to distract the world, it might have escaped notice, and obtained a fresh lease of

Sack of Rome.

Florence re-establishes the Republic.

life. Nay, it is possible that some such federation as I spoke of before, might have been formed with Genoa, Lucca, and Siena, and that the West-Italian Republic might have held a respectable place among the minor powers of Europe. But Clement lived just too long. When the final settlement of Italy took place by the agreement of the great powers, Charles the Fifth, now absolute master of the peninsula, agreed to allow the Pope to reconquer Florence for his family, and to give him the assistance of an army for the purpose. The army which he lent him was that very one which had occupied Rome. One might have thought that Clement would not have condescended to make use of the services of such men, and particularly for the subjugation of his own countrymen ; but he had no such foolish scruples. The Florentines made a gallant resistance. They had before, by the advice of Machiavelli, given up the old fatal plan of hiring mercenaries, and organised a national army. They had sent these troops into the field as auxiliaries to the French, more probably with the object of enabling them to acquire warlike experience than from any particular affection for Francis the First, and 5000 of them had perished under Lautrec's banners at the siege of Naples. But Francis, after he had got all the good out of his allies that he could expect, troubled his head about them no more than Napoleon, under similar circumstances, did about the Irish. He did not think it worth while to make any stipulation for them at Cambray, for fear, I suppose, of spoiling his own bargain ; and Florence found, in her great need, that she had suffered an irretrievable loss in the service of one, from whose heartless ingratitude the sacrifice was likely to meet with no requital. Still she determined to resist. It was perfectly hopeless to do so, but she deserves all the more honour on that account. The unequal struggle lasted for nearly a year. The Spaniards and Germans gradually pressed closer and closer round the doomed

Clement the
Seventh re-
conquers
Florence by
the aid of
Charles the
Fifth.

city, but the defence became more and more resolute as the danger became more overwhelming; and when at last the end came, it was brought about, not by the superior valour of the besiegers, but by the treachery of the Perugian general, to whom the command of the Florentine army had been intrusted. On the 12th of August 1530 the gates were opened, and the Medici acquired the rule of their country for the third time. This time it was final. Henceforward they are to govern it, not in the spirit of Cosmo and Lorenzo, but in that of the worst of the Scalas and the Visconti; and Florence is to be made to learn, by bitter experience, from what degradation and wretchedness she had been saved by her great men of former ages. It is some satisfaction to reflect that in the last days of the Florentine Republic, the valour and constancy of her citizens equalled, perhaps surpassed, anything that had been known in the days of her glorious prime. It is some satisfaction to think that in those days she was enabled to inscribe on the roll of the worthies of Italy the names of two men to whom the world has produced few equals—the clear-sighted and patriotic statesman Nicolo Machiavelli, and the daring and devoted soldier Francesco Ferrucci. But all the ability, the self-sacrifice, the heroism of her citizens, served for nothing except to throw laurel-wreaths over her tomb. The Republic of Florence, so long the head and the heart of Italy—the home of Italian freedom—the fountain of Italian poetry—the queen of Italian art—was gone for ever; and her fall is a fitting termination to the history of mediæval Italy.

We have followed, though with fitful and irregular steps, the progress of the Italian year, from the first outburst of Spring to the end of the frightful storms which swept the land in the latest days of Autumn. Few trees are left out of all that stately forest which in luxuriant foliage had overshadowed it, and they are but wrecks of what they had

been ; and, with their foliage nipped by the frosts, their boughs torn away by the wind, and their trunks scarred by the lightning, rather enhance than detract from the general effect of desolation ; while all the rest is covered, to the depth of many a foot, with a heavy winding-sheet of snow. To take another illustration, after the fashion of Temple and Ewald, we have accompanied the Italian nation from its birth to its long sleep. In the days of the boyhood of the people, the leader among them is the sturdy and vigorous schoolboy Milan, who gains their confidence by pugilistic skill, by teaching them to fight their way out of scrapes, and by heading the two great barrings-out, but who abuses his strength by bullying his weaker companions. In the days of their youth, the big rough schoolboy has developed into a coarse ill-conditioned animal, who, in company with several others of the same stamp as himself, grows to be looked upon rather as the pest of his college ; and the chief influence is not, as before, with the strongest, but with the cleverest and most thoughtful—with Florence, the scholar, the poet, the artist, with his heart full of noble aspirations, and his spirit rising against oppression and wrong. In their manhood the differences of character become less strongly marked ; and when they are thrown together in the commerce of later life, when their relations with one another are less intimate but more business-like, and when they are no longer inclined to afford confidence unreservedly, or to follow any one's lead, by degrees the greatest amount of respect is acquired by the sensible, the clear-headed, and the successful Venice. The day of trouble approaches, a day of adversity almost unparalleled, and their characters are brought out in full relief. The bully, whose nature, corrupted and weakened by long self-indulgence, has lost its tone, has no power or pluck to resist, and succumbs at once. The high-souled scholar who, in middle life, has lost a good deal of what imparted nobleness

to his youth, and has subsided into somewhat of a *dilet-tante*, rouses himself at the approach of danger, and displays, under the pressure of misfortune, qualities which in his prosperity had lain dormant. The man of the world who, under his hard practical exterior, hides a deep vein of romance, finds in the latter quality a spirit of unflinching endurance, which the former one enables him to turn to good account. In these last days of mediæval Italy, one is glad to be able to recover the respect and interest which, during the fifteenth century, she had almost ceased to inspire. Venice facing the combined forces of Europe gathered together in the League of Cambray, Pisa engaged in her death-struggle with Florence, Florence reviving the memory of her proudest days in her last defence against the army of Pope Clement, present some of the noblest pictures in the history of the world; and worthy to stand by the side even of such deeds as these, was another and a later one, which, if I have not considered as the event which crowns the history of Italy's fall, it is not because it was illustrated by less heroism than the siege of Florence, but because it seems rather to be a sequel of that great calamity—the sad but honourable tale of the overthrow of Siena.

The European nations who destroyed the independence of Italy, and wellnigh reduced her fair fields from a garden to a desert, profited by her spoliation but little. The wealth and beauty which had tempted them were almost as fatal to them as to her. Very few of the numerous European wars which have been waged from the time of Charles the Eighth to that of Napoleon, have avoided dragging Italy into their vortex, more as a sufferer than as an actor. Again and again, through the whole course of modern history, do the invading legions of France descend the Alps to reverse the settlement of Cambray, and wrest the prize from the hands of the house of Austria; and again and again are they rolled backwards, leaving behind them a

Punishment
of the na-
tions which
overthrew
Italy.

desolated land, and bearing nothing home but the marks of slaughter and disease. The punishment which has befallen the different states has borne some proportion to the degrees of their criminality. Spain, the worst of the foreign oppressors, lost, in consequence of the Italian wars, her ancient freedom—a freedom guaranteed by constitutions older than Magna Charta, and falling under a despotism more crushing than had been known in the West of Europe since the Roman Empire was broken up, has undergone a degradation far deeper than that which she was the main instrument of inflicting on Italy. France has for more than three centuries been cursed with a frantic desire to rule in that peninsula, compelling her, almost against her will, to lavish her treasures and pour out her best blood in attempts to conquer it, which have always in the end led to the invariable termination of disastrous defeat. Austria, the power which, perhaps, is the *least* chargeable of the three with the ruin of that unhappy land, but which still is deeply guilty, still maintains her hold upon a portion of it; but her connection with Italy has been the cause of almost all the calamities which she has endured since it began. It has plunged her into numerous wars; it has fixed upon her banners the stain of grievous defeats; it has heavily embarrassed her finances; it has led to her identifying herself with a system of severe repression, which has not only sadly checked her advance in prosperity, but has made her name unpopular in the estimation of the world; and at this moment, amidst all the dangers and difficulties which are hemming her in on all sides, the most formidable and the most hopeless of all is, that in spite of countless lessons to teach her the calamitous results of that connection, she still persists in the endeavour to maintain it. In the case of one alone of the destroyers of Italy, and that one far the guiltiest of all, has Nemesis appeared hitherto to sleep. That one amidst the

Impunity of
the Papacy.

states of that land which alone escaped the ruin of its compeers, was also that one amidst the enemies of that land which alone escaped the punishment of its associates. That Italian power which, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, had waxed fat and prospered, and derived increased store of wealth and greatness from the disasters of Italy, continued, down to the French Revolution, to be singularly exempt from the disasters of Spain, France, and Austria. That Power which has been in every age the enemy of the land wherein its home is fixed—that Power, which first blighted the young shoots of Sicilian civilisation, and then drowned them in a sea of blood—which, while deserting its proper seat in order to repose in luxury under the ægis of a foreign potentate, sent army after army to conquer for it there some shreds of territory—which cheered the Bretons to the massacre of Cesena—which summoned to their prey the plunderers of Cambray—which, for selfish ends, broke through the settlement of Noyon—which hounded on the ruffians who had sacked Rome to overthrow in the republic of Florence the last hope that remained for Italy,—that Power has hitherto escaped the retribution which has visited the less guilty foreigners—less guilty, because the misery inflicted by them has been in the form of alien oppression, not of domestic treason.

It would seem as if the fortunes of the temporal Papacy of modern history presented something like the cycle of events which I have endeavoured to describe in the case of the spiritual Papacy of the middle ages. From the day of Pope Boniface's fall, the policy of his successors has seemed to be to make up for the diminution of their spiritual position by the acquisition of that which belongs to a temporal sovereignty. For two hundred years that policy was carried on with checkered success, but unvarying resolution, from the days of its first great victories under Albornoz, who may be called its Hildebrand, to those of Julius and

Comparison
of the tem-
poral with
the spiritual
Papacy.

Leo, in whom it culminated, and who may correspond with Gregory the Ninth and Innocent the Fourth. From their day to the present has elapsed a long period of more than three hundred years, during which, in spite of apparent prosperity, there has been a steady, though almost imperceptible decline. The geographical extent of the ecclesiastical state has not till the present day been curtailed;* but the consideration in which its sovereigns have been held has diminished with each succeeding century. In the sixteenth century, the Pope might fairly claim to be considered a first-rate Power: in the nineteenth, he never could pretend to be anything more than a third-rate one. In the sixteenth century, Paul the Fourth bade defiance successfully to the armies of Philip the Second; and Pius the Fifth was one of the three high contracting Powers who sent out the armament which conquered at Lepanto. But in the seventeenth, Innocent the Eleventh was obliged to submit to a grievous insult from Louis the Fourteenth, for which he could obtain but little satisfaction; and in the eighteenth, the attempt of Clement the Thirteenth to support the confederates in the Seven Years' War, and invest that alliance with somewhat of the character of the League of Cambray, only produced from his intended victim a loud explosion of ridicule, in which all Europe joined. I shall say but little of the century to which we belong, barring this—that the final consummation seems drawing near. Already the spirit which reigns at the Vatican seems that which was seen at the end of the Dugento—the spirit of Pope Celestine and the spirit of

* I do not forget the loss of Parma and Piacenza. These duchies, which Julius first obtained possession of by an act of treachery towards his French allies, and which his successors committed many a subsequent treason in order to retain, were separated from the domain of the Church, without the least compunction, by Paul the Third (the “trust” theory of the present day had not then come into vogue), in order to provide an appanage for his nephew. But the loss was compensated by the escheat of Urbino and the seizure of Ferrara.

Pope Boniface at once. Again we see in the leaders of the Church a tone and temper which bear the same relation to those of Julius and Leo that the tone and temper of Boniface bore to those of Innocent. Again we see the temporal Papacy aping the garb which it wore at the time when its greatness culminated, even as the spiritual Papacy in 1300 aped that of the great men of 1250 ; raising the pretensions, using the violent language, and, I fear, imitating the acts of him who organised the League of Cambray, and shutting its eyes to the fact that the day at which they could be tolerated was past. It is unsafe to venture upon a political prophecy, even though that prophecy appears to be warranted by the signs of the times ; but when we see the counsels of the Vatican animated by a spirit analogous to that of 1300, one is compelled to think of the catastrophe of which that spirit was the forerunner. Even now the shadows on the dial are growing longer and longer. The instruments which the Papacy employed to enable it to crush its enemies seem to be taking their places, according to the ancient law of her punishment, in order to wreak the decrees of Nemesis upon her. Already the descendant of one of the confederates of Cambray has torn from her grasp almost the whole of the territories which she painfully scraped together by the long toil of centuries, and the perpetration of a million crimes : the representative of another, under pretence of protecting her safety, has made himself lord and master of her capital ; and a fanciful imagination might suppose that the vengeance of the League of Cambray and of the ruin of Florence is only delayed till Spain and Austria shall take part in it. It would be a fitting end for the Papal temporalities if what remains of them could be delivered over to the representative of the Duke of Savoy by the common consent of those who sit on the thrones of Louis, Ferdinand, and Maximilian. It does not seem likely that this should hap-

pen; but it is more likely than it was five years ago. Since that day, not only has the demand of Italy for her capital become more distinct, not only has the hopelessness of anything approaching to good government at Rome under the present system become more apparent, but the dawnings of a change have begun to come over all the three powers: France is beginning to tire of a position which, so far from flattering the national taste for glory, is in striking contrast to her professions, and gains for her the character of being selfish and retrograde: Spain is making a struggle to achieve material wealth and honourable renown, and develop mental activity: Austria is beginning to enter upon the path of constitutional freedom. In the natural course of events, many a long year must elapse before these causes could produce such effects upon Austria and Spain as to induce them to agree in such a course as I have named. But in the nineteenth century events move fast; and no amount of liberalism in the counsels of those two powers could have surprised a past generation, or even ourselves ten years ago, so much as the fact which we see before our eyes—that at the present day, in spite of hereditary provincial jealousies, in spite of the sloth and torpor of centuries, in spite of the long dominion of foreigners, Italy should at last have constituted herself into a nation—united, progressive, valiant, and free.*

THE ART
OF THE
QUATTRO-
CENTO.

If I have ill fulfilled the promise of brevity which I made at the commencement of the Italian Autumn, I will compensate for it by compressing what I might have said about the Art of the same period. I can do so only in one way, namely, by leaving it alone. Were I to attempt dealing with it on the same scale as the Art of the Trecento, I

* I shall hardly be supposed to mean that I *expect* this to be the way that the French occupation of Rome will come to an end; though it is probable that when that event *does* take place, some agreement will be come to between the three Catholic Powers on the subject of the Pope's maintenance.

should never have done. It would, I think, be more difficult to make out an exact correspondence between it and the political history of the time than we have found it hitherto ; but I think I should be able to maintain it in a general way.

One apparent difficulty would arise from the fact that Florence, which still keeps the foremost place as a school of art, not only goes on improving and improving during the Quattrocento, but makes at its commencement a fresh start—the advance which Masaccio, inspired by the sculpture of Ghiberti, made upon Giotto and his school, being as remarkable (to my ideas, more so) as that which Giotto, inspired by the sculpture of Nicola, made upon Cimabue and Cavallini ; and that this renovated art is contemporaneous with the *decline* of the spirit of liberty. A great part of this difficulty vanishes when one recollects that, at the end of the Trecento and the beginning of the Quattrocento, Florence, not yet under the Medici, was engaged in foreign wars, which tried her resources and called forth her energies more than any which she had been engaged in since the struggle against Castruccio ; and therefore that Ghiberti and Masaccio appeared at the time of all others when it was most natural that they should have appeared. But there still remains the fact that all through the century, the Florentine school, instead of falling off as the Giotteschi of the Trecento had done, kept fully up to the mark, never, perhaps, *quite* equalling Ghiberti, but still worthy of him, and, while not losing in power of expression, steadily gaining ground in the mechanical portion of the art ; and that all that time the Republic was falling more and more under the dominion of the Medici.

The truth is, that the government of that family, as it was during the Quattrocento, was not very unfavourable to art—in some ways rather the reverse. If their rule had begun at Florence two centuries before, it might have been

Influence of
the Medici.

different ; but though it might have prevented the tree from taking root, it was not of a nature to check it when once it had attained a considerable height, and was spreading forth its boughs on every side ; for it was no Roman or Milanese tyranny. The citizen of Florence might still flatter himself that he belonged to a republic ; that there was no one on earth before whom he required to bend the knee ; perhaps, even, that his rulers were the men of his own choice : he had, what was much more important, the feeling that he was a free man, that his actions were under his own control, and that if he was trammelled in any way, it was by the laws which his ancestors had helped to make, and not by the caprice of any individual ; * and though he might miss the overflowing life of the earlier days of the Republic, the ever-changing councils, the often-assembled parliaments, the animated debates, the constant excitement, yet he could not complain of being a slave. And though the supremacy of the Medici was not in itself a source of encouragement to genius, and barely escaped being a *discouragement*, yet it was not without some collateral advantages ; for they were, at least in the fifteenth century, men who had not only a great love for letters and the arts, but also a correct judgment and a refined taste, and who did almost as much good by the aptness of their criticism as by the liberality of their patronage. As far as the Medicean government was freedom, it was not that freedom under which art could have been born ; but as far as it was a despotism, it was not that despotism under which it need have been killed.

Double
sense of the
word li-
berty.

Liberty may be taken in two senses. In one sense it

* I do not mean to say that the Medici never stretched their authority to unconstitutional limits ; but their irregularities were rather those of the chiefs of a faction than of the despots of the state ; and that the chiefs of a faction could be guilty of illegal exercise of power had been written on many a sad page of the history of the Republic, from the days of Buondelmonti onwards.

means independence and freedom from control ; in the other it means a right to take part in the government. Generally, neither has been found without the other, at least to some extent ; but it makes a great difference to the national character which of the two ideas is the leading one ; and it would hardly be too much to say, that the predominance of one or the other is the test-mark by which, in the present day, nations are to be classified. The tendency of the one, if allowed to proceed unchecked, is to result in French imperialism ; that of the other, under the same circumstances, to result in Polish anarchy. The one was the freedom of classic antiquity, the other that of mediæval Europe ; and it has been argued, by abundant examples both in ancient and modern times, that they may be considered respectively to belong to the South and the North, to the Latin and the Teuton ; while that this character of the two races is not immutable may be seen by any one who looks, on the one hand, to modern Italy, and, on the other, to the Federal States of America.

Of these two, that which I most identified with art was, How it affects art. on the whole, the power of individual expansion, though not without a good deal of the other also. I say power of individual expansion, because it expresses the fact better than the word "independence." Independence, as we understand it, the Italians never had : they had inherited from the Romans the practice of intrusting a great deal more to the government than it is our fashion to do ; but though they allowed their elected magistrates to do many things which in our country would not be tolerated, they had no notion of imperialism, and, in fact, considered that a tyranny founded on universal suffrage was worse than any other kind of tyranny. They expected their governments to leave them alone, to let their national energies find vent in the way that best suited them, and in that case they were ready to condone a good many arbitrary

stretches of power, as the English were under the Tudors. The excitement of the councils and the parliaments was one method of expansion, and perhaps it was that by which the national life was most developed ; but it was not the only one, nor was it in all cases sufficient. Padua and Venice had not that method, and yet their schools achieved great triumphs ; and, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively, competed honourably with Florence. Pisa *had* that method, and yet her art died out after the defeat of Meloria ; the loss of her maritime greatness struck a chill into her nature, and froze up the current of her blood.

Various influence of liberty and feeling.

I have said a good deal of this already in another form, in a note, and I do not know that I have made it any clearer now. Shall I be more so in going a step farther and saying that there were two sources from which the inspiration of the painters and sculptors, as well as that of the poets, of Italy was derived ? First, liberty, such as I have described it ; and, secondly, the deep feeling with which the people of the peninsula were actuated, and which, though differing in different places, both in intensity and in the objects to which it was directed, existed everywhere where there was any real school of art. It was necessary that both these influences should have their share ; and the character of the school depended very much on the proportion which they bore to one another. So at least it seems to me ; and though, if this idea be true, it would be possible for those who are conversant with artistic criticism to follow it out into many details, I shall content myself with one detail—that of colour. Where colour is bright, I should expect to find that the inspiration of the painters came from liberty ; where it is rich or glowing, that it came from some deeper feeling, directed to something beyond themselves.

Colour.

Influence of liberty at Florence.

Florence is the chief example of the predominance of the former influence. Her great passion was for freedom, first

for herself and then for others. She possessed it, and her painters were enabled to cast off the fetters of tradition, and lead the van in the career of improvement; she was passionately devoted to it, and it impressed itself on the works which her artists produced. I do not know whether I am justified in saying that it even gave to her paintings during the Trecento something of a character of colour. In the Quattrocento it was still (at least in my sense) in her possession; but it had ceased to be a passion, and no other passion had taken its place; and the art of the Quattrocento, though it is most attractive, almost fascinating, is singularly colourless. Filippo Lippi seems almost to do without colour altogether: Benozzo Gozzoli is wonderfully graceful, and very happy as a colourist, but always producing an effect of gaiety rather than of richness; and Ghirlandajo and Filippino Lippi often seem not to know how to manage their tints, and put them together with a harshness and rawness almost unpleasing. It is true that a love of colour begins to be rather strongly developed towards the end of the century and all through the disastrous period of the foreign invasions—in Luca Signorelli, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolommeo, and Leonardo da Vinci; but during that sad time the spirit of liberty, which had been languid during the century, woke suddenly up into a new life, inspired the Florentines to do greater things for her sake than they had ever done before, and infused the warmth of an almost forgotten patriotic devotion into the hearts of the citizens, which would find its natural effect in the deeper tones of their art.

The other influence operates variously in various places. At Siena it takes the form of a religious awe: in Umbria of a religious mysticism: with the Paduans, of love for their princes: with the Venetians, of love for their country. And I think it will be found that this strong feeling is represented in painting in the way which I have men-

Influence of feeling in Siena, Umbria, Padua, and Venice.

tioned. The schools of all these localities have about them the element of colour pretty strongly developed, though in very different ways ; and I think that it would not be impossible to find, or fancy one could find, in the diversity of their colouring, a reflex of the diversity of the feelings which respectively animated their people. I will not venture to go any further into this ; but I should like if some one who was competent to do so would work it out for himself, and give to the world the results of his lucubrations thereanent. I am disposed to look upon the change which, after the time of Taddeo di Bartolo, established the predominance of the paler school at Siena, rather as a confirmation than as an exception to the rule which seems to connect strong colour with deep feeling ; for during the Quattrocento the spirit of Siena languished even more than that of Florence did. Her politics were stationary and her annals obscure. And in art she clung to the past more as a matter of habit than as a matter of feeling ; and her traditions were not so much a source of inspiration as a bar to improvement. If she imitated and even surpassed Florence in the languor of the fifteenth century, so did she imitate her in the patriotism and devotion which she showed at the beginning of the sixteenth ; and at that time she became the seat of a new school of painters, distinguished among other qualities for the depth of their colour—that of Pacchiarotto, Beccafumi, and Sodoma. I think another confirmation may be found in the character of the Æmilian schools, to which some time back I attributed the quality of dinginess. The Æmilians had no strong passion for liberty, and no strong devotion to any cause. Bologna sometimes indulged in a little faint republicanism, and Ferrara was not without attachment to the house of Este. But Bologna's republicanism, even in her best days, was not that of Florence, and Ferrara's attachment was hardly that of Padua. So, though they were not without art, it was neither brilliant nor gor-

Character of
Æmilian
art.

geous, but dingy.* One exception, or, as I call it, a flaw, occurs at the end of the century in the case of Francia.

The contrast between the two influences may be best seen by comparing the Florentine artists with the most prominent and most distinguished representatives of the other influence, the artists of Venice. I have already said that there is an essential difference between the two, which goes very deeply into everything that belonged to them ; and I think that the more one sees of them, the more that difference is brought out. In the external history of the peninsula, in the history of its diplomacy, of its negotiations and of its wars, the two great republics are ranged side by side in opposition to the tyrants—standing as guardians of liberty, as the rocky fortresses of Argos and Nauplia seem to stand at either side of the entrance of the plain of Argolis. But in the world of art the contrast between them becomes apparent. It might have been expected that it would be so. Florence and Venice are the antipodes of the life of Italy. In comparing Florence with Siena, I attributed something of the difference between them to their relative situations. At Venice the difference is more remarkable still. The gay and cheerful scenery of the neighbourhood of Florence, as seen from Fiesole or S. Miniato, Careggi or Bellosguardo, with the city with its domes and spires set like a jewel in the midst of it, seems the very scene which should be looked at on a morning in spring. Venice rising, as you approach from Trieste, like a fairy vision from the expanse of waters—above which the line of the shore of Italy is only to be guessed by the occasional trees which fringe the horizon, and in the back-

Comparison
of Florence
and Venice.

* I am not saying anything of the school of the Carracci, Guido and their associates,—that belongs to a later date, and represents a different principle. I cannot express that principle better than by referring to Macaulay's essay on Dryden, and saying that they are among painters what Dryden was among poets ; while Chaucer and Shakespeare may be held to correspond respectively with Giotto and Raphael.

ground the distant masses of the Alps, or, as she may be seen from a gondola as you float along the Lagoons—seems as though it should be looked at on a summer evening;* and when you enter the towns the difference is the same. At Florence all is life and action. The noise and movement of her streets is equalled, among all the Italian cities that I know, by Genoa alone; while they have not, generally speaking, the narrowness and the high overshadowing houses which give to those of Genoa such an air of gloomy grandeur. At Venice all is stillness and quiet; her main streets are water-ways, where no sound can be heard but the cry of the gondoliers, and her smaller ones are alleys too narrow to admit the passage of wheeled vehicles. Florence, save in some places where some grim old fortress, probably used for government offices, stands to record the fierce contests of Guelf and Ghibelline warfare, looks almost like a modern city; and though her cathedral and some of her churches recall the memory of ancient times, yet they do not have the effect of violent contrast. Venice appears to belong exclusively to the past, and, in her melancholy beauty, seems as if she might be like the city of the ‘Arabian Nights,’ the City of Silence. Much of this difference is, no doubt, due to causes arising from the politics of the present day; but I think the main features of it would be but little altered even if Florence admitted the Austrians, and Venice was annexed to the kingdom of Italy.

And this difference of aspect is reflected in their history. Florence was the latest of the Italian republics to rise to greatness and importance. Her name is indeed heard in the days of Barbarossa, but it is not till the beginning of the thirteenth century that it becomes prominent; and as soon

* I have every right to say this, for no part of my notion has anything to do with association. I have many times looked at Florence from the points I mention, but it has always been in the evening. I have once seen Venice from the sea, and that once was in the morning.

as it *does* become prominent, she is not content till she has pushed herself into the foremost place. Her increasing wealth, her commercial activity, her noisy freedom, gain for her a power disproportioned to the extent of her territory. Of all the Italian States she attracts to herself the principal attention, not only from her own countrymen, but also from foreigners ; she assumes the leadership of the League of Lombardy ; and whenever any important event is at hand—whether a great loan is to be raised by a foreign power, or an effort to be made to arrest the progress of an aggressive tyranny—it is to her that all eyes are turned. The air of romance which seems to float over the city of Venice seems also to tinge her annals. She took root before the Roman Empire fell, and rose in health and vigour from amidst its ruins. All through the darkest part of the dark ages, she lived on, growing and growing in power. She establishes in the seventh century a regular government ; in the ninth, alone and unassisted, she sets limits to the advance of Charlemagne's empire ; in the tenth she conquers the Narentine pirates, and makes herself mistress of Dalmatia. Long before the other cities of Italy have entered upon their career her name is great all along the shores of the Mediterranean ; and in the minds of her countrymen she appears as being of themselves, and yet not being of themselves : she sometimes interferes in the politics of the peninsula, and almost always with decisive effect ; but generally she seems to belong to a sphere to which they do not belong ; for her eyes are ever turned towards that glorious but unknown land “at the gateways of the day,” the city which was the cradle of their religion, and the city where reigned the Cæsar of the East, who represented in uninterrupted succession the traditions of the Roman Empire. In those lands she wages wars, of which dim reports come to European ears ; she accumulates treasures of untold wealth ; and both wars and treasures are

seen by the Italians, and maybe by the Venetian people themselves, through an encircling haze of romance. Her institutions bear the same stamp. The Venetian looked up to a government whose counsels were mysterious, and into whose secrets he dared not pry, but whose decrees were irresistible as fate, and whose wisdom was as the wisdom of Achitophel. As compared with those of other states, its form might well seem immutable ; and those who conducted it bore names which had belonged to those who had conducted it from the beginning. I need not say how different a picture was presented by the institutions of Florence.

The Venetian people were in one respect like the English of the time of Elizabeth. Although their government was despotic, they were practically free. The nobles might, like the Tudor courtiers, occasionally pay with their lives the forfeit of having failed in the game of ambition ; but the people were not much trammelled, if at all. They cared not to concern themselves with the affairs of government, and did not resent their exclusion from them ; but they felt that those who had undertaken their management were worthy of the task, and that they had obtained for their country a prestige in the eyes of the world, which gave dignity to every one of its citizens ; and in the directions in which their energies most naturally found vent—those of commerce and maritime adventure—they were not only permitted, but encouraged to expand most freely. Is it to be wondered at that their country, being such as it was—surpassing all other cities in picturesqueness and beauty, all other histories in antiquity and romance, all other institutions in inscrutability and unchangeableness, all other governments in wisdom and success—should have obtained from its subjects, and especially from those to whom in a more peculiar manner it belonged, an almost adoring devotion, which has made the patriotism of the Venetians almost

without a parallel in the history of the world? Is it wonderful that the art of Venice should have produced a Giotto and a Titian, any more than the many-sided exuberance of Florence should have given birth to Benozzo Gozzoli and Michael Angelo?

I will here conclude. I had more to say; but time presses, and the space that is left to me to finish in must be counted by minutes. I am glad to have just had time to enable me to contrast, though very hastily, inefficiently, and incompletely, the two great nations, upon whose history that of Italy principally turns—the people of the May morning and the people of the September evening—the Florentines and the Venetians.

Note referred to at page 59.

The Emperors had sometimes ceded those parts of the "Donation" which were included in the bequest of the Countess Matilda; in fact, as one part of that bequest—the province known as the "Patrimony of Peter"—it is doubtful whether they had any right to withhold it, as it was an allodial possession of Matilda and her ancestors, and one, consequently, which their feudal claims as kings of Italy could not touch, and which could only be supposed to belong to them in virtue of the shadowy kind of universal dominion which might be held to attach to the person of Cæsar. With the feudal dominions of the Countess, the case was different; and she had no more right to bequeath them to the Pope than the Duke of Lorraine would have had to bequeath his to the King of France. Still, the claim founded on her bequest was more legitimate than that founded on nothing but the Donation of Constantine to Charlemagne; and on the not very frequent occasions when popes and emperors were friends, the former sometimes got it recognised. Innocent the Third even contrived to extract, on one occasion, from Frederick the Second the cession of Ravenna, which seems extraordinary enough; and it can only be accounted for by the fact that Frederick was very young—that Innocent had acquired considerable personal ascendancy over him—that he was very busy in contesting the possession of Germany with Otho the Guelf, who, though losing ground, was not mastered—and that it was necessary for him, at all hazards, to keep the Pope firmly attached to his side. But such a wholesale surrender, not only of territory, but of imperial (perhaps I ought rather to say of *royal*) rights, as

Rodolf now made, would at no time have been dreamed of by Frederick. I may as well say here that I have talked very freely of the feudal rights of the "Empire" over its territories all through this sketch. I shall not go over it again to put in explanatory notes in every place ; but I may as well say, once for all, that it is a very loose way of talking ; and then, when I do so, the chances are that I mean the rights of the emperors as Kings of Germany or Kings of Italy, as the case may be.

THE END.

ERRATA.

- Page 17, line 21, *for* "Nuova," *read* "Nuovo."
- „ 106, „ 20, *for* "Fagginola," *read* "Faggiuola."
- „ 135, „ 17, *for* "viceroyal," *read* "viceregal."
- „ 169, „ 35, *for* "Palæologus," *read* "Palæologus."
- „ 170, „ 25, *for* "Palæologi," *read* "Palæologi."
- „ 248, „ 7, *for* "Uballini," *read* "Ubaldini."
- „ 250, „ 28, *for* "Scadella," *read* "Scalella."
- „ 252, „ 25, *for* "Scadella," *read* "Scalella."
- „ 253, „ 17, *for* "Scadella," *read* "Scalella."
- „ 274, „ 26, *for* "Miniato at Tedesco," *read* "Miniato al Tedesco."

